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NEA Today

WASHINGTON, D.C. NOVEMBER 1987

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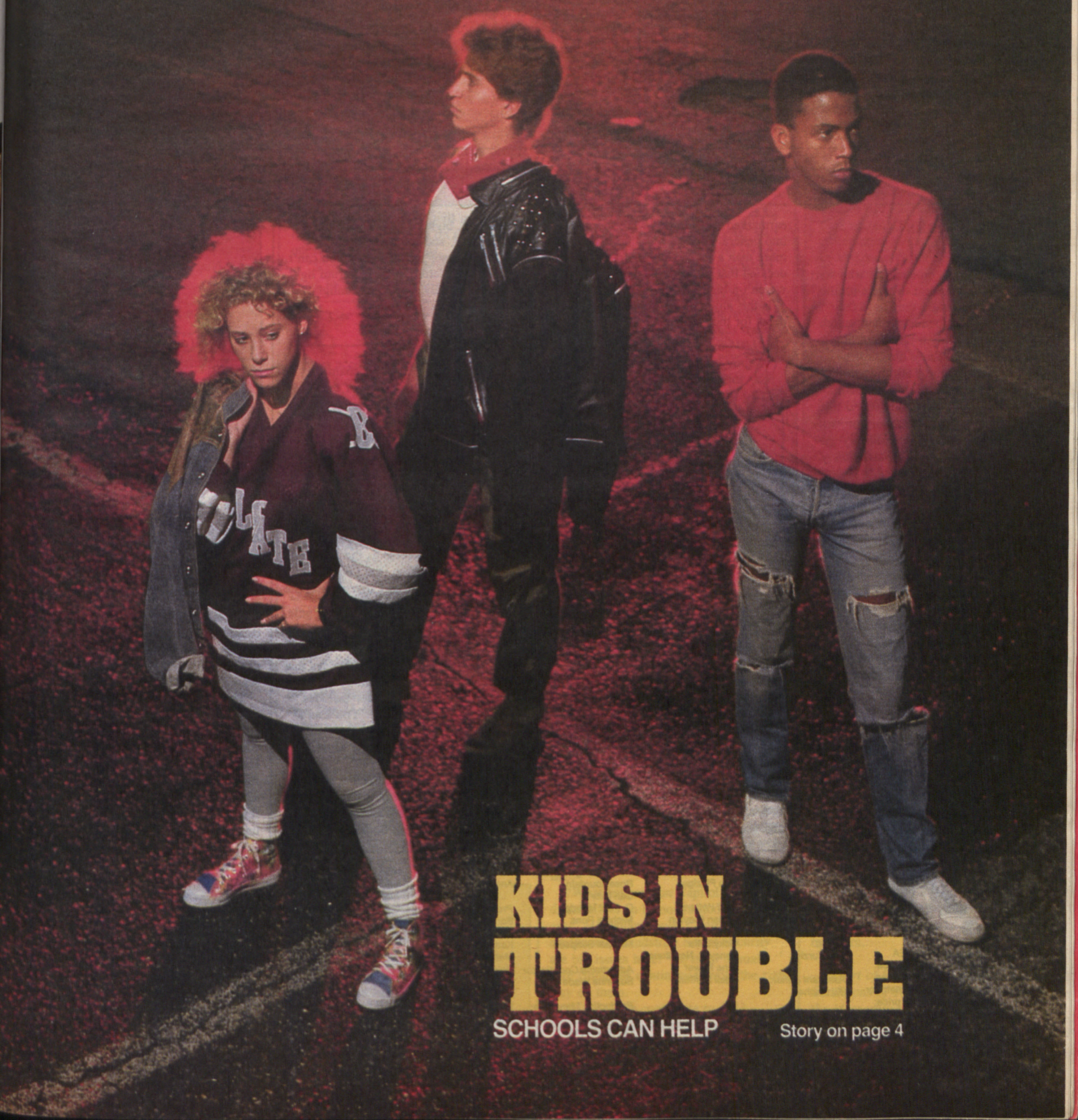


KIDS IN TROUBLE

SCHOOLS CAN HELP

Story on page 4

PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

ESPecially Important

The motto of the Kentucky Education Support Personnel Association proclaims that *support personnel are the backbone of education.*

I could not agree more. And I'm proud that ESP membership within NEA has leapt from 10,000 to near *120,000* in eight short years.

You, our ESP colleagues, deserve the credit for this stunning increase. You have reminded us all that education is not confined to the classroom, that it is, at its best, a schoolwide endeavor.

I know, of course, that school support staff's contributions are undervalued, often unnoticed, almost always unrecognized. And I'd like to outline three measures our schools could implement to counter this injustice.

First, administrators must recognize that ESP employees are indeed the *supports* on which all else rests. No school can function smoothly without them. They have clearly earned the right to share in the process of defining schoolwide objectives. And they deserve due credit for their contributions.

Token credit cannot be tolerated. *Appropriate* credit would include increased compensation, guaranteed due process rights, improved benefits, and assurance of a hazard-free workplace.

These advances would signal only a beginning. They must be bolstered by programs that both allow ESP employees to share their expertise *and* foster ESP/teacher collaboration. A cafeteria worker, for example, might enlist the support of a biology teacher to address school staff on nutrition. A

Joe Di Dio

NEA President
Mary Hatwood Futrell

custodian might work with a member of the science department to present information on the proper storage of toxic waste. A bus driver might be the perfect choice to convince students that drinking and driving is a deadly mix.

Second, I suggest the formation of *joint* ESP/teacher committees to develop action plans that would bring together the cafeteria worker and the classroom teacher—the nurse, custodian, secretary, and bus driver as well as the counselor—in an effort to create a more positive learning environment for children. These committees could identify informal strategies that would help students cope with both emotional and academic difficulties.

I'm always impressed by the way support employees seem to understand instinctively the difference that even a few minutes of quality time can make in a student's day—and a student's life.

Finally, I know of no school not in need of a more effective tutoring program. I suggest that teachers and support personnel work together to fill this void. And I urge all support employees to participate. Maybe you only have one free half-hour a week. Fine. Just remember: that half hour, spent with a student who has difficulty reading, may make the difference between a child who grows up illiterate and a child who grows up to write literature.

Teacher aides would prove invaluable in helping develop these programs. Their in-the-trenches experience, their patience, and their proven ability to detect the source of student difficulties make them ideal candidates for this role.

The education reform movement has given scant attention to ESP employees. But the plain fact is that today's schools cannot succeed if education support personnel are stranded at the periphery of school life. Their rightful place is at the center.

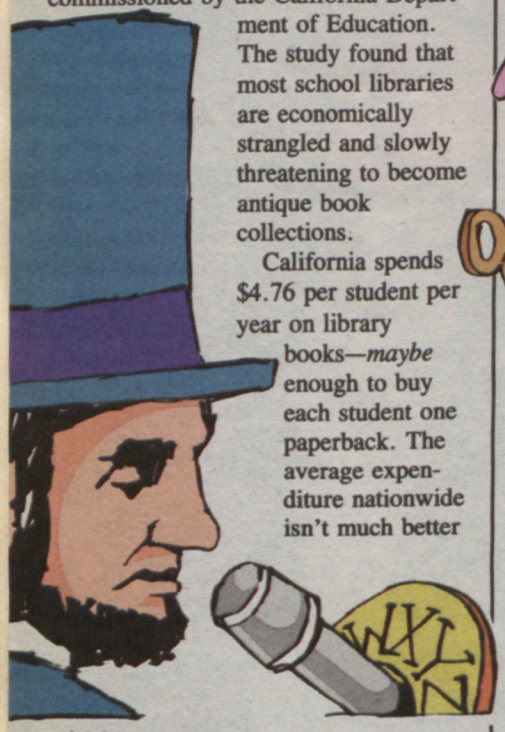
Now is no time to relent in the drive to have the worth and dignity of ESP members acknowledged. All of us must aggressively assert their right to equality within the education community. And if that takes a fight, then fight. If that means rocking the boat, then rock away. Tolerance of the intolerable is no virtue. □

TRENDS

'Lincoln Speaks At Gettysburg'

Don't be too tough on students who start their reports on current events with this sentence. Chances are they used the school library to conduct their research.

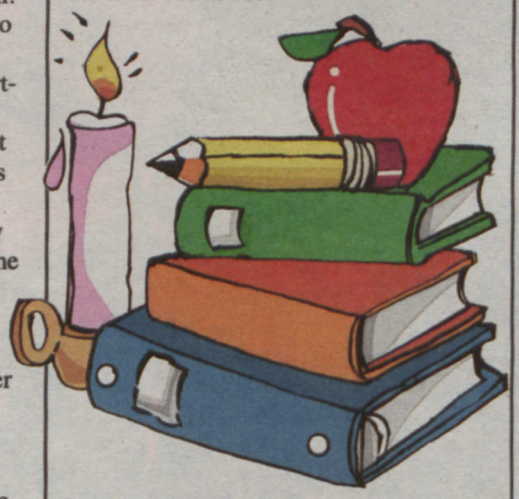
Far-fetched? Only a bit, according to a study of 1,500 school libraries commissioned by the California Department of Education. The study found that most school libraries are economically strangled and slowly threatening to become antique book collections.



California spends $4.76 per student per year on library books—*maybe* enough to buy each student one paperback. The average expenditure nationwide isn't much better—$6.24 per student.

School libraries began to feel the fiscal pinch in 1981, when federal funds earmarked for libraries were merged into general education grants. Evidently, more than a few school district officials decided that library resources just weren't a high-priority item for schools.

Is this any way to prepare our students for the 1970s?



Time To Try Candles?

First came the warnings about exposure to the sun. Now comes word that fluorescent light produces an array of ill effects. And your students may be the prime victims.

Professor H. Wohlfarth of Canada's University of Alberta compared children studying under fluorescent lights with those working under "full-spectrum" lights. Wohlfarth found that fluorescent-lit students had more health-related absences, lower scores on tests of self-confidence, higher rates of behavior problems . . . and more cavities.

The professor's conclusion: you can't fool Mother Nature. Full-spectrum light that more closely resembles sunlight is to your students' advantage.

A Kingly Price

Arizona Governor Evan Mecham may be learning—the hard way—of the esteem in which the nation holds the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The governor's cancellation of the state holiday honoring Dr. King has so far chased away 32 conventions. Cost to the state: $12 million.

Among those protesting the governor's action by cancelling conventions scheduled for Arizona cities are organizations as diverse as the National Basketball Association, the League of United Latin American Citizens, and the United Methodist Church.

Not a Dramatic Change

Here they come again—the 10 plays that will be produced most often by high schools this year. The roster includes "Arsenic and Old Lace," "You Can't Take It With You," "Anything Goes," "Bye Bye Birdie," and "The Music Man."

Starting to sound familiar? It should. According to *Dramatics*, a magazine for students and teachers published by the International Thespian Society, six of the

shows in this year's list also made the Top 10 of 1970-1979. And the "newest" of the plays listed above first hit the stage in 1960, the oldest in 1934.

The Hitch in the Latch

When asked to identify seven possible causes of students' difficulties in school, 51 percent of public school teachers picked "children left on their own after school" as the top cause.

The Louis Harris poll, sponsored by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, uncovered greatly increased concern about the latchkey phenomenon. Harris said the survey showed the need for "not just daycare, but a complete support system" that would leave far fewer students alone, lonely, and unsupervised after school. □

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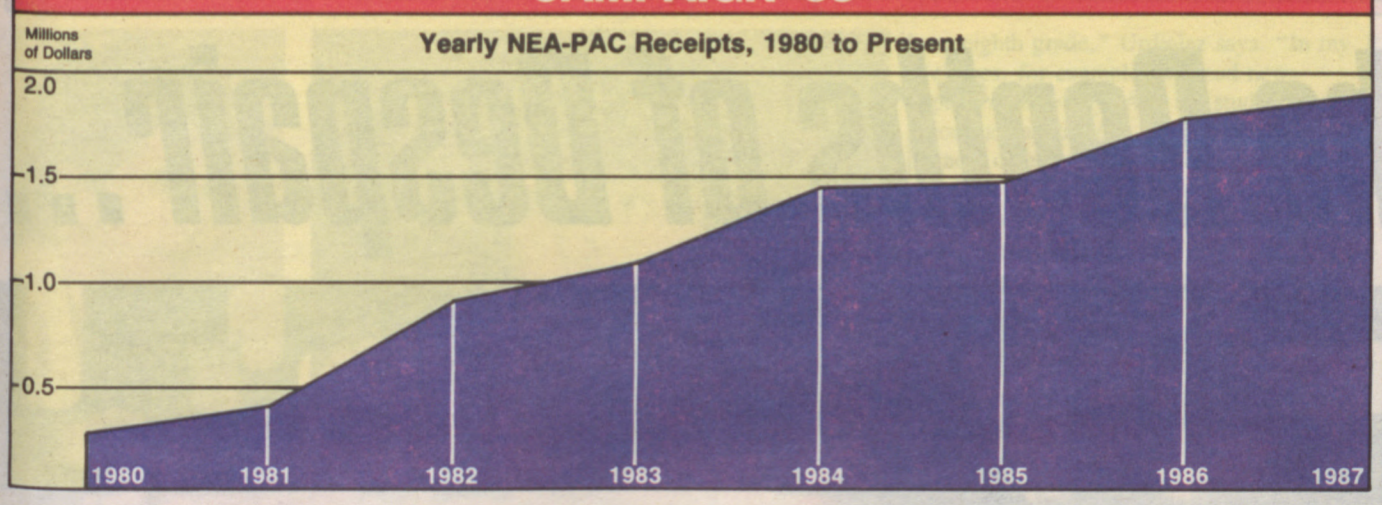
CAMPAIGN '88



As PACs Grow, NEA-PAC Zooms

Growing Up Politically

Congress has repeatedly stopped the drastic cuts in aid to education proposed by the White House over the past six years. NEA's political action arm, NEA-PAC, is a big reason why.

The 1988 Presidential race is, of course, already well under way. But the Presidency isn't the only crucial office up for grabs in '88. For education particularly, next year's congressional elections are every bit as important.

The Reagan years, in fact, have dramatized vividly the importance of Congress to education. In every year since 1981, Congress has firmly stopped the severe budget cuts in education proposed by the Administration.

Will the Congress elected in 1988 continue that support for America's public schools and colleges? That will depend, in large part, on the political activism of NEA members and NEA's increasingly prestigious political action arm, NEA-PAC.

NEA-PAC, short for the NEA Political Action Committee, gives NEA members clout in politics by pooling individual small contributions. NEA members can't compete one-on-one with well-heeled, big campaign donors. But together, through NEA-PAC, the voluntary contributions of NEA members add up fast—and make politicians listen.

Unlike Presidential candidates, candidates for Congress receive no public funding for their campaigns. They have to raise their own money, which is where political action committees come in. Candidates can receive contributions from any registered federal political action committee (PAC)—up to $5,000 in the primary and $5,000 more in the general election.

"The federal campaign laws give NEA-PAC the opportunity to identify pro-education candidates, endorse them, and donate both money and volunteers to their campaigns," notes Ken Melley, the Association's Government Relations director.

What does NEA-PAC accomplish with an endorsement?

"Two things," Melley explains. "The opportunity to muster our organizational clout on behalf of pro-education candidates *before* the election, and a better chance to achieve our legislative agenda *after* we help them win the election. A senator or House member who's been endorsed by NEA-PAC will most often hear NEA members out on a legislative question of concern to us.

"Sometimes," adds Melley, "even those incumbents we *haven't* endorsed give us access—especially if they won in a close election and recognize that we're serious players in the political system, who must be reckoned with."

See related story on page 7 of this issue.

In 1972, its first year, NEA-PAC contributed $30,000 to congressional campaigns. In the 1986 two-year election cycle, NEA-PAC spent $2.5 million and endorsed 339 candidates in the general election. Eighty percent of them won.

NEA-PAC, unlike many other political action committees, regularly endorses challengers to unfriendly incumbents. That approach makes NEA-PAC's winning percentage even more impressive.

What kinds of candidates get NEA-PAC endorsements?

"Candidates who support the legislative program adopted every year by the NEA Representative Assembly," says Ken Melley. "The endorsement process is issue-driven. NEA-PAC doesn't care what party candidates belong to, as long as they will support our NEA legislative priorities."

Both Democrats and Republicans have won NEA-PAC endorsements.

"Supporting NEA-PAC is in the interest of all of us who work in education, no matter what our political party may be," says NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell, who also chairs the NEA-PAC Council. "Anyone who sees benefit in the NEA legislative program—which supports legislation on behalf of children, public education, and public employees—will want NEA-PAC–endorsed candidates to win."

NEA-PAC has become a serious force in national politics. According to the final report issued by the Federal Elections Commission for the 1986 elections, only the National Association of Realtors and the American Medical Association had political action committees that contributed more dollars to federal candidates than NEA-PAC did.

To be successful today, congressional campaigns need a *lot* of money. TV time and opinion polling together can devour millions of dollars per candidate. In 1986 the 435 House races cost $239 million; the 34 Senate races, $211 million.

But a NEA-PAC endorsement means more than dollars to a campaign. The real value of a NEA-PAC endorsement is that along with it comes the volunteer campaign help of many NEA members—members like Marge Houghland, a veteran home economics teacher in Paris, Ill.

"What happens on Capitol Hill has a direct effect on Illinois school employees," Houghland says. "Tuition tax credits and mandatory Social Security are big issues here. We need to make sure Congress continues to vote the right way on them.

"If we don't contribute to NEA-PAC," Houghland concludes, "there isn't anyone else who's going to fight for us."

—Nancy R. Needham

Sign Up for NEA-PAC

All contributions to NEA-PAC start at the local Association level. NEA-PAC encourages every Association member to give at least $10 annually. If you're not already enrolled in a NEA-PAC payroll deduction or electronic funds transfer (EFT) plan, contact the NEA-PAC rep in your building, your local Association president, or your local UniServ staff person. If you're already enrolled, you may want to up your contribution as we move into the 1988 election year.

If you don't have an automated NEA-PAC contribution system available in your local, your annual check or cash contribution to NEA-PAC will be welcome. *—N.R.N.*

Top Contributors to Federal Candidates (1986 Two-Year Election Cycle)

1.	National Association of Realtors PAC	$2,782,338
2.	American Medical Association PAC	2,107,492
3.	**National Education Association PAC**	**2,055,133**
4.	United Auto Workers V–CAP	1,621,055
5.	National Association of Retired Federal Employees PAC	1,491,895

Source: Federal Elections Commission report, May 1987

News Beat

● About 90 percent of America's college-bound students are now completing the minimum **English and math course load** recommended by the landmark 1983 education reform report, *A Nation At Risk*. A new College Board study shows that 88 percent of the students who took College Board exams in 1987 will have completed four years of English before graduation. Some 92 percent will have taken three years of math.

● Black and other minority students gained the most ground in the **Scholastic Aptitude Test** results announced earlier this fall. The reason? Experts cite the contribution of federal programs aimed at helping economically deprived students, the very programs the Reagan Administration has sought to eliminate. Average verbal and math scores among Black students have jumped a total of 6 points since 1985.

● The U.S. Census Bureau reports that America's **Hispanic population** has doubled since 1970, from 9.4 million to 18.8 million. Hispanics now account for 8 percent of all Americans. Since 1982, the number of Hispanic school-aged children has increased 14 percent.

● Echoing a longstanding NEA call, the presidents of 37 major U.S. colleges and universities have urged **college/high school partnerships** to support the teaching profession and improve the quality of education. In a letter to all 3,300 colleges and universities in America, the 37 presidents urged efforts to make teaching "a true profession on an intellectual, social, and economic par with the professional career alternatives currently available to our best students."

● Some 86 percent of the students chosen at random across the nation to take a **writing skills test** did "competently" or better. The study was conducted among 6th, 10th, and college-bound 12th graders by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. □

WELL PUT!

"The essential resource for improved education is already inside the school: determined, intelligent, and capable teachers."

—Report of Special Commission on the Conditions of Teaching, appointed by the Massachusetts legislature. Co-chairs: State Senator Richard A. Kraus (left) and State Representative Nicholas A. Paleologos.

COVER STORY

From the Depths of Despair...

Bart Bartholomew/Black Star

Hope for Troubled Kids

Todd Panagopoulos

Illinois teen Brian Pauling leads the planning for a retreat where students can discuss their greatest problems.

Today's young people have so many—and such painful—problems that it's hard to know where to start to help them. One place, say many NEA members, is with the notion that each child deserves a future worth looking forward to.

The ancient Greek warrior state of Sparta, it was said, was a place "where the fathers buried their children."

In the United States today, we bury the dreams of childhood. Frightening numbers of our children are getting into situations that will make it harder for them to ever know happiness, peace, or self-respect.

Using illegal drugs, getting drunk, having babies, dropping out of school, running away from home to face unknown perils, killing themselves, killing others—too many of those who are our country's future are preparing themselves for no future at all.

Out of the current school-age population of some 40 million, how many are involved in activities that can burn out the hope of a lifetime in a few months—or a few minutes? Estimates are staggering: more than 60 percent of high school seniors report drug use, a third of 12- to 17-year-olds report use of alcohol and 1 in 8 report use of marijuana in the past month, a million girls a year have babies, 5,000 teens commit suicide, nearly 1,800 are murdered, almost 50,000 are held in correctional institutions, a million drop out of school or are chronically absent.

The numbers added together total several million young people in trouble. But in this case the whole is *less* than the sum of its parts. Drug user, alcoholic, dropout, graduate of juvenile hall, teenage parent, would-be suicide, runaway—all can apply to a single youngster. Young girls who use illegal drugs or who often get drunk, one recent study showed, are more likely than others to get pregnant. Students with learning problems are at risk not just of dropping out, but of getting into trouble with the law.

The problems of youth don't arise spontaneously—they have causes, and those causes can produce a variety of effects, which in turn foster one another.

If kids in trouble are often in trouble in several ways, programs to help them have to address a wide range of problems. Schools are doing just that. And, they're doing more. Schools are going straight to the heart of the problems kids face: young Americans' lack of confidence that there is a place for them in our nation's future. Through a range of strategies, schools are helping students discover their worth to themselves, to their classmates, and to the society.

The strategies vary. But most rely on—

► Students' ability to influence one another, in discussion groups or as peer counselors.

► Parents' concern for their children.

► The security that young people gain from knowing that someone cares enough about them to set limits to their behavior.

Programs built upon these foundations are making a difference all across the country.

In Wyoming's Natrona County, school staff have been trained to recognize a variety of symptoms that something's gone wrong in a student's life.

Once staffers spot a troubled student, they refer that student to other specially trained staff—teachers, counselors, or school nurses. These people tell the student what they see that concerns them—and then invite the student to join a group of schoolmates working on the same problem.

"We confront inappropriate behavior," says Cecelia Rodgers, a school social worker at the 1,500-student Natrona County High School (NCHS). "The message to students is, 'This is what you're doing, this is what it leads to, what do you want to do?' "

The Natrona County project—dubbed SAIL (for Student Assistance in Life)—began in 1980 as a districtwide project to help students deal with problems that might drive them toward drug abuse. Through a grant from the Johnson Foundation, over 100 Natrona County teachers, counselors, and principals have been trained to pick up signs of trouble in students.

In the program's first semester, NCHS referred 84 students—the second semester, half as many.

"Because of what we were doing," says Rodgers, "coming to school drunk went from cool to dumb in one semester."

SAIL offers students five different kinds of group help. *Re-entry* groups provide encouragement to those returning to school after extended time out, say, for treatment of drug abuse. *Concerned persons* groups gather students who are concerned about someone else's chemical abuse—for example, children of alcoholics. *Insight I* groups are for students who want to look at their own chemical use and perhaps get help in ending it, while *Insight II* groups are compulsory for students who have been found possessing or under the influence of chemicals at school.

Sharing groups are for students who

COVER STORY

Todd Panagopoulos

Ed Lambert and Christie Gibson think over possible subjects for major sessions in their Chicago area high school's annual four-day student/staff retreat.

feel some problem is interfering with their learning—students who have family problems, for instance, or are facing grief or shame. "When the kids and their problems change," Rodgers says, "the program changes."

Students can't take part in more than one group at a time.

"Sometimes," says Rodgers, "we have to sit them down and find out what the real problem is. Maybe the family's falling apart or dysfunctional, and the kid is trying to get rid of the pain. What we try to show is, 'We really do care about you here. Let's look at some other ways you can feel better.' "

Students can join the four voluntary groups only with their parents' consent. The groups meet every Wednesday, at a different hour each week to keep the meetings from interfering with any particular class. Students make up the work for each class they miss.

A group will be made up of eight to 10 students, and sometimes as many as 10 groups are operating at once. Students can stay in a group for as long as they want, as long as they get their parents' permission each year.

"There's no simple solution," Rodgers acknowledges. "There's no one problem. And some things are so horrendous that we can't fix them whatever we do. But we try. If you don't do something, it just gets worse—and the kids end up dead."

Each year, the weekend before Thanksgiving, more than 100 Illinois teenagers go to camp—a real camp, with cabins and bunks, and group leaders who, for the rest of the year, are their own schoolmates and school staff.

These Illinois teens come from Homewood-Flossmoor High School, some 35 miles south of Chicago, and they've got four days to talk over some pretty serious matters. With a student body that runs the gamut of socioeconomic levels and draws some 12 percent of its members from minority groups, Homewood-Flossmoor reflects the variety of problems that face teenagers across the country.

The agenda for the annual retreat is set by a planning committee of students and adults. Beginning in September, the committee members meet every Tuesday for an hour and a half after school to thrash out what will be the central problems to confront in the retreat they call "the Snowball." About 5 percent of the student body signs up for the retreat. Its $10,000 cost is funded by candy sales, concessions at athletic contests, donations, the board of education, and the high school's own administration.

The Homewood-Flossmoor "Snowball" is one of many such school retreats in Illinois, all started some 10 years ago to follow up on a statewide youth conference on substance abuse. The philosophy behind the retreats is simple: All youngsters have the capacity to make sound decisions about their own life and behavior, if provided accurate information and knowledge.

The students at each Snowball retreat meet in a large group to discuss some half-dozen major issues—issues like self-esteem, drug and alcohol pharmacology, peer pressure. Groups of 10 students, each with one teen and one adult staff person, follow up these discussions in specialized workshops. The topics vary: stress, suicide, AIDS, race relations, alcoholism, sexuality, and lighter topics like relaxation and getting your priorities straight.

Throughout the retreat, everyone has the right to speak—and the right not to speak. Small group comments are held in confidence, and no one is permitted to ridicule anyone else.

The retreat is strictly a preventive measure—students with serious problems are referred for professional help. Anyone found with drugs is sent home.

At San Antonio's Magnet School, "we're meeting the needs of the students instead of expecting the students to meet the needs of the schools," says social studies teacher Armando Urdialez.

The Magnet School was set up last year when staff of the Edgewood Independent School District matched 14- and 15-year-old seventh and eighth graders with an empty school building. Today the school has 150 students.

The curriculum at the Magnet School is highly concentrated on reading and math, in whatever amounts and by whatever methods the 10- or 11-student classes need them.

"We try to give the students enough in one year to make up for what they missed in two or three years in seventh or eighth grade," Urdialez says. "In my classes, for example, we read newspapers every day. And the students keep journals about what they do on weekends, or how they feel about their parents or their friends, or about using drugs and alcohol. They write so much they amaze themselves."

Respect is another central ingredient in the Magnet School program. Edgewood is one of the poorest of some 15 school districts in the San Antonio area, and the Magnet School's student population draws heavily from three public housing projects. Many students come from hard-pressed families where nobody insists that they be home at a certain hour. But the Magnet School shows that it cares where they are. If a student is absent one morning, an aide calls the house and persists until she can ask a parent what the trouble is.

And parents cooperate. Staff members visit every family at the beginning of the year, talk with the students and parents, and ask the parents to sign a statement of support for the school.

"They sign," says Urdialez. "They know their kid is getting into trouble, and they don't know how to stop it themselves."

Respect for students means respect for teachers as well, Urdialez point out. "At the beginning of the year I tell students, 'My name is hard to pronounce, so you can just call me Sir.' "

The students' major language is English, but many of them also speak a unique San Antonio dialect of Spanish.

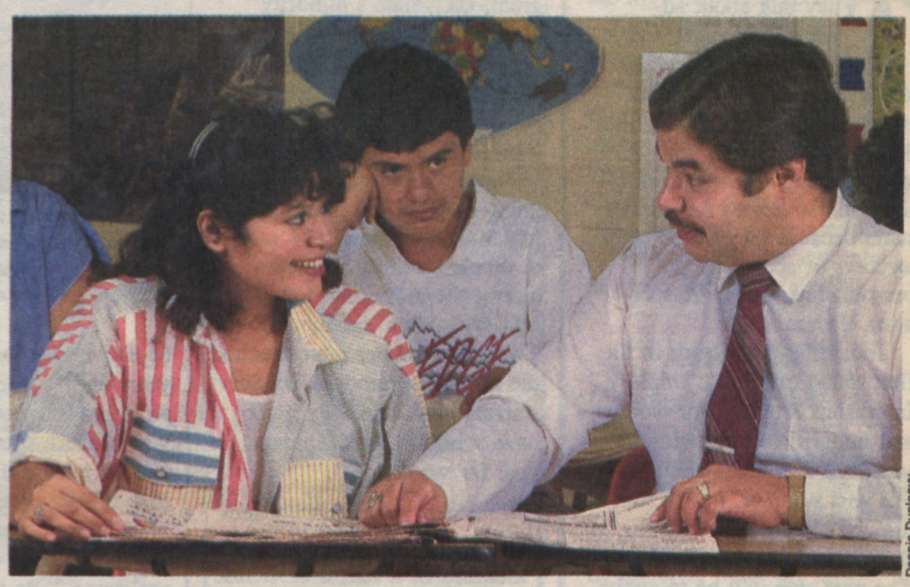
"They hope I can't understand them when they use it," says Urdialez. "But I grew up here, too."

Some of the students still use drugs, but not in school. Last year, while the other junior highs were racking up an average of a fight a day, only two fights occurred at the Magnet School.

"I ask the students not to put each other down," Urdialez notes, "because they may hurt each other—although if they're hurt, they'll hide it. In fact, these kids are very good at hiding. They used to hide behind their classmates, way at the back of the room. But in a class of 10 students, there's no place to hide. They can't do here what they did in the other junior highs. We're going to teach them, and we won't let them fail."

At the end of last year, the students who had average grades and good attendance records were placed in special smaller-than-average classes in the regular high school, where they continue to have a tailor-made curriculum. Others, whose problems had been with attitude rather than academics, went into regular ninth-grade classes.

"When they go to the high school," says Urdialez, "I tell them, 'Look, four years from now, I want an invitation to your graduation.' "



Dennis Dunleavy

Rather than drop out, San Antonio teens who fall behind can turn to the Magnet School to prepare for success in high school. Here, social studies teacher Armando Urdialez clarifies a point with Marie Frias and Albert C. Alvarado.

For U.S. public schools, the challenges are going to grow. Almost a fourth of this country's children live below the poverty line. For every 10 homeless adults, eight children are homeless—and two of those children are out of school.

The dropout rate for children from poor families is three to four times the rate of children from higher income groups. Hispanics, a rapidly growing segment of the population, are twice as likely to drop out as Anglos.

Whether youngsters stay in school or not, many of them have little chance to dig their way out of poverty. The unemployment rate for young people seeking work is more than 17 percent—for Black young people, 38 percent.

The schools have still more difficulties to overcome. Delinquency rates among 10- to 17-year-olds have risen 130 percent since 1960. U.S. teenagers use drugs at the highest rate in the industrialized world.

Problems feed on one another, but so can solutions. The three programs described here reflect hundreds of other similar efforts from coast to coast. They aren't answers—they're neither perfected for their localities nor readily transferable. But they can suggest answers—answers that might help the troubled young people in your community.

—Jane Power

Keeping Kids in School: NEA Takes the Lead

The problems that plague our adolescents tend to drive them out of school. Dropping out of school, in turn, is likely to aggravate their problems. In 1985, the delegates to NEA's Representative Assembly vowed to help cut the nation's 25 percent high school dropout rate in half by 1990. They set aside $700,000 for Operation Rescue, a unique effort to funnel resources to anti-dropout projects designed and developed at the local level by NEA members.

Today Operation Rescue, administered by NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE), stands as a national model for dropout prevention. Some 20 different Operation Rescue projects are under way.

In Memphis, Operation Rescue is funding an imaginative daycare center for the children of high school students. In Bardstown, Ky., Operation Rescue is supporting a special counseling program. In San Antonio, an Operation Rescue project is teaching media and leadership skills.

At this past summer's Representative Assembly in Los Angeles, delegates voted to set aside for Operation Rescue one dues dollar per NEA member for the next five years. These dollars will help create a $13 million endowment for NFIE—to ensure funds for Operation Rescue–type projects for years to come.

—J.P.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Joe Di Dio

A new NEA internship program seeks to increase the number of minorities and women among UniServ staff. The first 16 interns, pictured here, are currently in three-month field assignments.

UniServ Seeks Equity Through Internships

They talk about advocacy, change, and organizing. They talk about improving the lives of education employees and about developing strategies for strengthening the Association—lives and strategies they understand because they've all been teachers or school support personnel as well as Association leaders.

Today they're interns in the first round of NEA's UniServ Internship Program for women and minorities. Following an intensive four-week seminar this past summer, the 16 interns are completing their training in three-month field assignments. The next step will be to apply for UniServ staff openings.

"Through the internship program, I'm filling gaps in my background in grievance processing, negotiations, and organizing," says Carole Howard, a veteran of 17 years in the classroom and former president of her local Association in Casper, Wyo. "I saw becoming part of the UniServ staff as a way to be a full-time spokesperson for NEA members."

Under the 1971 guidelines establishing the UniServ program, each state's minority UniServ staff should at least equal the percentage of minorities in the state population. And women should comprise at least half the UniServ personnel.

Now, with the UniServ program 16 years old, there are just 308 women and 174 racial or ethnic minority members among the more than 1,220 Uniserv staffers nationwide. Twenty-two states have reached the minimum minority UniServ staffing goal, and only seven have achieved the 50 percent goal for women.

Ernie Leyba/PHOTOSTAFF

"Education employees need advocates," intern Carole Howard of Lakewood, Colo., believes. "That's the role I want to play."

Are you a woman or a member of a racial or ethnic minority group? As an Association activist, have you ever thought you'd like to stop working for your school district and start working for your colleagues? If so, you're invited to put your name in the "NEA Affirmative Action Candidate Bank." Applications are available from your local UniServ office.

The NEA Board of Directors approved the UniServ Internship Program in May 1986 as a way to increase the number of women and minorities holding UniServ staff positions. The program, under the direction of NEA Affiliate Services, provides training in organizing, collective bargaining, grievance processing, and organizational development—the skills needed to deliver programs to members and help local Associations become self-sufficient.

The interns are also learning about the complexities of representing the changing NEA membership.

"People entering the teaching profession today don't necessarily have the same objectives as those who came in years ago," observes Ptah Ra, an intern who taught for 11 years before spending the last two on release time as president of NEA St. Louis.

Tom Strickland

"You've got to know the issues to represent NEA members," says Malcolm Staples of Indianapolis.

"The new teachers are coming in at a time when salaries are rising," Ra notes. "These people don't have to fight the same battles previous generations of teachers fought. They're not going to be as concerned with job security. They assume professional treatment is their right. They don't assume they'll have to live their lives on inadequate salaries."

Political action is another topic on the minds of the current interns. "A lot of NEA members have to become more political," says Kenneth Wiggins. A teacher in East Orange, N.J., for 12 years, Wiggins held several elected positions, including the vice-presidency of his local, before joining the internship program.

"We can be effective in communities, districts, states, and in national politics," he believes, "only if our local and state affiliates are strong and well organized.

"NEA is taking a big step toward moving women and minorities into the Association network," Wiggins adds.

The internship program will continue until minorities and women are equitably represented among UniServ staff throughout the country.

—Rose Jourdain

WASHINGTON WATCH

When Giants Walked

It's become fashionable to dismiss the 1960s and 1970s as a loopy time. A time when, in the words of Secretary of Education William Bennett, "there was not a dopey or daffy idea that didn't end up in our schools."

That sort of blanket dismissal of educational and institutional changes wrought during those two decades belittles the vast progress that was made.

In the "halcyon" days of the 1950s and before—the days to which Bennett and others are so eager to return—there were racially separate public schools offering two very different, and unequal, educational programs. There were few programs for economically disadvantaged, limited-English-proficient, or handicapped students. It took leaders with vision and courage to forge programs to address these educational needs.

In the remarkable 89th Congress (1965-66), Senators like Wayne Morse (D-Oregon) and Jacob Javits (R-N.Y.) and Representatives like Adam Clayton Powell (D-N.Y.) and Carl Perkins (D-Ky.) shared a commitment to public education and a deep understanding of the needs of America's public schools. They were joined by a number of others in Congress, and by a powerful ally in the White House—President Lyndon Johnson, a former Texas schoolteacher and principal.

These men recognized the inextricable links between public education, social justice, and economic attainment. They understood that the vast inequities of resources and commitment among state and local governments necessitated a federal role if equity were to be achieved.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) they developed is a landmark in American public education. A recent analysis shows that after the creation of ESEA's Title I (known since 1981 as the Chapter 1 compensatory education program), disadvantaged students' scores on standardized tests rose appreciably.

The passage of ESEA was the beginning. Over the next few years, under the stewardship of this same core of leaders, Congress created many other watershed elementary and secondary education programs, including the Bilingual Education Act of 1968.

In the 1970s, congressional leaders interested in improving education set a new focus for their efforts: postsecondary education. Most of the postsecondary student aid programs were created in this era, including what are now known as the Pell Grants after Sen. Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), who shepherded the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 through the Senate.

Besides opening the door to educational opportunity for disadvantaged postsecondary students, the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 established statutory protections against sex discrimination and created a number of institutional aid programs for colleges and universities serving disadvantaged students.

Better education for handicapped youngsters was another congressional goal in the early 1970s. At that time, according to then-Rep. John Brademas (D-Ind.), only about half the nation's 8 million handicapped students were receiving an adequate education, with about 1.75 million shut out of the public schools entirely. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 changed that.

Some of the individuals who played a part in these earlier breakthroughs are leaders in today's 100th Congress—and still have an abiding commitment to public education. They include House Education and Labor Chair Augustus Hawkins (D-Calif.), Senate Labor and Human Resources Chair Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), and a handful of others.

But only 40 members of Congress have served continuously since 1966. Newer members don't share the same understanding of how these programs were developed, the intent of the legislative authors, and the political struggles of the time. Half the House and a third of the Senate have taken office in the Reagan era. They've heard these federal programs characterized as part of the problem, not part of the solution.

NEA members have an obligation to see that Congress and the public don't take these longstanding programs for granted. And just as NEA members had a hand in setting the stage for the federal education programs of the 1960s and 1970s, our efforts will make a critical difference in helping a new generation of leaders in Congress set the national direction for education in the future.

—Michael Pons, NEA Government Relations

State Side

MID-ATLANTIC

Fed up with the low priority given to education by state leaders, the 16,000-member West Virginia Education Association has filed suit against the legislature and the governor, charging that the 1987-88 state budget is unconstitutional.

The WVEA suit, now pending in the state supreme court of appeals, argues that by spending $13.4 million less than the legal requirement to meet the school aid formula, the budget violates the state constitution's call for "a thorough and efficient schooling for every child."

A ruling in WVEA's favor would trigger a special legislative session to deal with school funding.

Although Gov. Arch Moore agrees that the budget is unconstitutional, he argues that calling a special session would be too costly and prefers that the legislature address the problem at its next regular session in January.

"We disagree," says WVEA president Tom Vogel. "For less than $100,000, the legislature could meet and restore the missing $13.4 million. Waiting until January will mean that the education of our children will be further hurt."

NORTHEAST

The Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA) has won $1.4 million in back pay and salary hikes for 400 women faculty members and librarians.

A four-year-old class action suit charging pay inequities in the nine-college system was pending in federal court when MSCA convinced the Massachusetts board of regents to settle without a trial. The settlement calls for $930,000 in back pay and $465,000 in salary increases. Individual pay increases average between $650 and $1,600, depending on the institution.

Notes MSCA President Vincent McGrath, "Our statistics show conclusively that women are being paid 20 percent less than their male counterparts. Our arguments carried the day."

PACIFIC

Hawaii's teachers have a new two-year contract that's a major victory for the Hawaii State Teachers Association. HSTA negotiates with the state board of education for one agreement covering all Hawaii's teachers. This year, the governor stepped in during the final hours and helped negotiate the contract.

The agreement increases salaries by 18 to 32 percent—with the largest percentages going to employees at the lower end of the salary schedule.

On Feb. 1, 1989, the entry salary for the majority of teachers will top $24,000, and the highest salary will top $42,000. These were major HSTA goals.

Additional HSTA victories include reduction of the number of steps on the salary schedule, improvement of the grievance procedure, and better language on teacher preparation periods.

Following nine long months of negotiations, HSTA members ratified the contract by an 87 percent vote on Sept. 16. They had held out, risking a possible statewide strike, after other state employee unions settled for inferior contracts.

By doing so, they achieved all their major bargaining goals and made Hawaii teacher salaries competitive with those in other states.

SOUTHEAST

Louisiana owes its public schools some $42.4 million—and thanks to a lawsuit by the Louisiana Association of Educators, a judge has ordered the state to pay up.

In a summary judgment issued this past summer, state district court Judge Doug Moreau declared that the legislature's 1986 cuts in state aid to education were unconstitutional.

The Louisiana constitution requires the legislature to appropriate sufficient funds to ensure a "minimum foundation program" (MFP) in all elementary and secondary schools, but last year the legislature cut the MFP by 4.5 percent.

Louisiana, whose teacher salaries rank 48th in the U.S., is suffering a severe teacher shortage. Even with the state money restored, notes LAE President Virginia Budd, "The children of Louisiana deserve more than just the minimum."

Nevertheless, the state plans to appeal the judge's ruling.

MIDWEST

In a single September day, Missouri NEA held news conferences in the state's three strategic media centers to speak out *against* an increase in sales and corporate taxes proposed by the rival Missouri State Teachers Association, an independent group.

The tax hike initiative, with revenues earmarked for education, will be put to the state's voters in November.

"We need more money for education, but we know from experience that this type of tax increase won't work," explains Missouri NEA President Martha Karlovetz. Missouri NEA opposes the tax hike because—

► It's earmarked only for K-12 education. Higher education and early childhood education need more funds too.

► When Missouri passed a similar sales tax increase back in 1982, legislators simply substituted the new revenues for general appropriations.

► The timing is bad. Voters must choose a governor and six statewide officials in this election. Tax initiatives are more likely to be successful in off-year elections; in major election years, they tend to be clouded by political rhetoric.

"We see this proposed tax increase as a band-aid solution to solving school funding problems," Karlovetz adds. "What we really need is a comprehensive approach to tax reform and school finance." □

HOW STATES RANK ON NEA-PAC CONTRIBUTIONS

Westerners Raise the Political Ante

The table below shows how NEA's state affiliates currently stack up on contributions to NEA-PAC, the Association's political action arm that provides campaign funds to pro-education candidates in federal elections.

For the second year in a row, Wyoming leads the nation in contributions per member, at an average $3.17 for the year ending Aug. 31, 1987—up from $2.93 the year before.

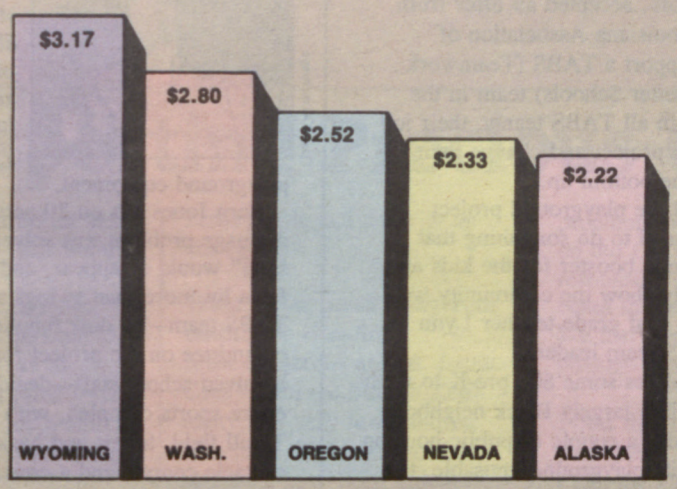
Ranking next in per-member 1986-87 contributions are Washington, at $2.80; Oregon, at $2.52; Nevada, at $2.33; and Alaska, at $2.22. Those states were also the top five per-member contributors in 1985-86, NEA Government Relations Director Ken Melley reports, although in different order.

"One factor that makes a big difference in these averages is payroll deduction of political action contributions," suggests Melley. "Associations that use this convenient way to contribute generally do much better."

Average NEA-PAC contribution per member nationwide now stands at $1.07—the highest ever, but still far short of the NEA-PAC goal of $10 per member per year.

"Now that we're into the crucial 1988 election cycle," notes NEA President and NEA-PAC Chair Mary Hatwood Futrell, "this is the year we hope to make a significant gain toward the $10 goal. If every NEA member gave $10 to NEA-PAC, we'd see our political war chest grow from the current $1.9 million to $18.6 million." (*See related story on page 3.*)

As might be expected, states with large NEA memberships lead the way in total NEA-PAC contributions. California raised just under $275,000 in 1986-87, followed by Michigan at nearly $130,000, Washington at about $127,000, Pennsylvania at about $97,000, and Illinois at almost $88,000. Washington, with 45,338 NEA members, is the only state to rank in the top five on both per-member and total contributions. □



NEA-PAC Contributions, 1986-87

Rank	State	Average Per-Member Contribution	Total Contributed
1	Wyoming	$3.17	$ 20,794
2	Washington	2.80	127,023
3	Oregon	2.52	69,211
4	Nevada	2.33	19,697
5	Alaska	2.22	12,763
6	Hawaii	2.05	23,206
7	Montana	1.93	15,183
8	North Dakota	1.85	14,037
9	New Mexico	1.69	11,341
10	Arizona	1.63	34,906
11	California	1.62	274,449
12	Overseas	1.49	7,810
13	Connecticut	1.47	40,307
14	Michigan	1.39	129,684
15	Illinois	1.38	87,841
16	Alabama	1.37	71,245
17	Rhode Island	1.35	8,796
18	Maryland	1.35	42,773
19	Mississippi	1.34	14,517
20	Colorado	1.32	36,281
21	Vermont	1.24	7,663
22	Delaware	1.23	7,767
23	Nebraska	1.23	23,067
24	Louisiana	1.18	26,230
25	Pennsylvania	1.16	97,358
26	Florida	1.16	39,892
27	Idaho	1.13	9,694
	UNITED STATES	1.07	1,818,784
28	Kentucky	1.07	31,866
29	Utah	1.02	16,205
30	South Dakota	0.95	6,344
31	Missouri	0.79	13,126
32	Maine	0.78	12,355
33	Texas	0.78	53,822
34	New Hampshire	0.77	5,916
35	North Carolina	0.77	35,401
36	New York	0.76	20,964
37	Minnesota	0.74	28,808
38	Georgia	0.74	21,851
39	Ohio	0.69	59,426
40	Wisconsin	0.69	30,830
41	Tennessee	0.68	26,404
42	Kansas	0.60	13,148
43	Indiana	0.60	23,788
44	Arkansas	0.57	8,167
45	Iowa	0.55	18,497
46	South Carolina	0.55	7,956
47	West Virginia	0.54	9,084
48	Oklahoma	0.51	17,097
49	New Jersey	0.50	54,713
50	Virginia	0.43	18,193
51	Massachusetts	0.17	10,459
52	Puerto Rico	0.04	830

Figures are for Sept. 1, 1986, through August 31, 1987.

Local Look

NORTH DAKOTA

The Mandan Education Association, in south central North Dakota, has lost a battle—but not the war—with the local school board. High school teachers in Mandan are now scheduled to teach a sixth period with no extra pay. In the past, most senior high teachers taught five periods, and those who taught an extra period were paid for that time.

The North Dakota Education Association sued the Mandan board last August, but a district judge upheld the school district's right to change the schedule. The judge said the board announced the change well in advance of issuing contracts and had never negotiated away its right to make changes.

The Association disagrees, arguing that the board has no right to alter past practices without negotiating with MEA.

"NDEA and MEA are considering an appeal to the state supreme court," says NDEA President Peg Portscheller.

ARIZONA

Tucson's nonprofit Educational Enrichment Fund (EEF) has given nearly $200,000 in the past three years to some 300 teachers for special classroom projects.

EEF was established in 1984 when Tucson Education Association member Ray Davies, then-president Judy Kreloff, and three other community leaders persuaded the school board that such a fund would be a community asset.

"With the decline in federal and state education funding, we wanted to find a way—independent of the district bureaucracy—to get fairly big bucks to teachers," recalls Davies. "EEF was the answer that occurred to me and to some of my students' parents. It's now a going community concern. We have a fund-raising week every October. We get large contributions from local businesses, and smaller ones from individuals—including teachers—who can target their United Way contributions to the Fund."

TEA gives workshops on proposal writing. Teacher projects EEF has funded include an archaeological dig, talks with Holocaust survivors, and the research, writing, and publication of *Tales from the Barrio*—stories of three generations of Hispanic families in Tucson.

NEW JERSEY

The Millville Teachers Association bought a ¼-page ad in two local newspapers in late September to pitch the importance of parental involvement in education. The ad took the form of an open letter to the parents and employers of Millville, reminding them that "the greater the level of parental involvement, the more successful education will be."

The open letter went on to request that employers of parents approve their requests for time off if necessary to attend back-to-school nights, school board meetings, parent conferences, and other school functions.

"Rather than chastising parents for *not* being involved in their children's education, we decided to show parents how we're supporting their efforts to be involved," explains MTA President Chuck Maul.

VIRGINIA

School employees in the Washington, D.C., suburb of Arlington County don't have to look far to find high quality, competitively priced day care for their preschool children.

Thanks to the advocacy of the 900-member Arlington Education Association, employees' kids can attend Children's School—one of the first such day care centers in the nation.

The facility is housed in five rooms of a former elementary school and run by a cooperative nonprofit corporation of parents. The corporation pays the district a nominal fee for use of the rooms.

Since opening its doors in September, the center has been caring for some 35 children full-time. Others attend on a day-to-day emergency basis. The facility can accommodate up to 70 children between the ages of two months and five years.

AEA had advocated such a program for several years—ever since an NEA survey showed that the county's school employees had a significant need for quality child care.

"Arlington traditionally has had an older teaching staff," explains AEA President Sara Jane Knight, "but that's changing now. As our older teachers retire, we see the center as a drawing card to help attract the best new teachers."

IDAHO

Teachers in Moscow wanted to discuss professional issues as part of their contract talks this year. The school board's hired negotiators flatly refused.

Result: the first strike in the 100-year history of the Moscow school district.

The nine-day strike ended Sept. 3, after the board met directly with Moscow Education Association negotiators—and agreed to contract language providing for teacher input into curriculum, in-service programs, school budgets, and other professional issues.

MEA President Dale Mason attributes the clear-cut strike victory to teacher unity and community support. Only seven of Moscow's 160 teachers crossed the picket lines, she points out. And when almost 800 local citizens showed up for a rally that included demands to recall the school board and fire the superintendent, settlement was reached that same day.

"The victors in this strike were our schools and students," says Mason. "If we stick together, we can make things happen for education in Idaho."

ARKANSAS

In the first teachers' strike in state history, the Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association (LRCTA) walked out in late September, closing down schools.

As we go to press, a state chancery court judge has denied a request for a back-to-work order. The major point of disagreement is salary, but disarray in a district that hasn't had a superintendent since last spring has contributed to teachers' dissatisfaction.

LRCTA has drawn the support of parents, firefighters, postal workers, the Fraternal Order of Police, and other groups. Ten state legislators addressed an Association rally on the state capitol steps. Strike support has become a community affair, with businesses contributing everything from sandwiches to cases of soft drinks for picketers. One retired teacher chipped in with a gross of doughnuts.

"The teachers were ready for this," says LRCTA President Grainger Ledbetter, "and we're going to see it through.

"It's healthy to question authority," Ledbetter adds, "because authority isn't always right." □

TEAMWORK PAYS OFF IN NORTHERN LOUISIANA

Monroe Local Sparks Playground Renaissance

David Humphreys

Where a year ago there were quicksand and rusty, seatless swings, today stands a manicured new soccer field—the first piece of a $50,000 sports complex planned for the grounds of Berg Jones Lane Elementary School in Monroe, La.

Last fall a small teacher group at Berg Jones, members of the Monroe City Association of Educators, accepted an offer from NEA and the Louisiana Association of Educators to support a TABS (Teamwork Approach for Better Schools) team in the building. As with all TABS teams, their job was to choose a project and change their school "from the bottom up."

"We selected the playground project because we wanted to do something that would be a morale booster for the kids and would physically show the community we care," explains first grade teacher Lynn Nash, the TABS team leader.

Berg Jones serves some 800 pre-K to sixth grade students in a largely Black neighborhood that includes a couple of public housing projects. With its playground unusable, the school had been unable to field a team in the city's elementary soccer league. Worse, because children rode bicycles in the streets for lack of anything else to do, several had been seriously injured in accidents.

"We started out just planning to build new playground equipment," Nash says, "but we soon realized that the 43 teachers in this school could not do that alone."

As the team reached out to the larger Monroe community for help, its members began to expand their horizons.

"One of our most enthusiastic supporters has been the *Monroe News-Star-World*," Nash reports. "Not only has the paper written about us, but the editor told us to form a nonprofit group so we could receive contributions. He also suggested we do something more with the site than just put up new playground equipment."

David Humphreys

Clockwise: Leaders from LAE and the Monroe City Schools at Berg Jones School; TABS team leader Lynn Nash; teacher George Ella Norman stirs frying fish at sports complex fund-raiser as Paula Pittington looks on.

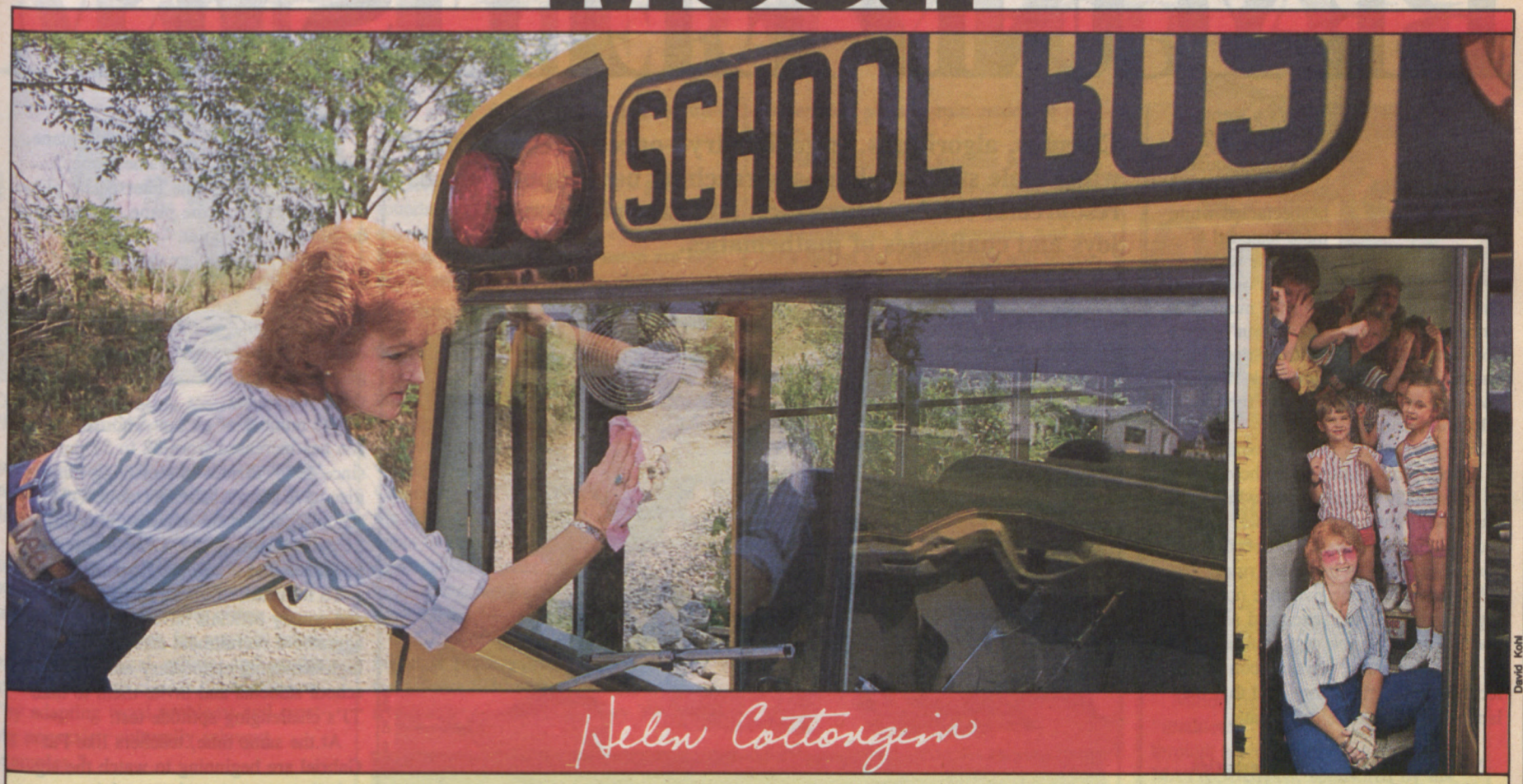
Berg Jones sits on 20 acres. Once the drainage problem was solved, the "quicksand" would disappear, and there'd be room for a lot more than swings and slides. So the TABS team—by now functioning as steering committee on the project for a totally involved school staff—decided to go for an entire sports complex, with a soccer field, a T-ball field, tennis and basketball courts, an obstacle course, and a creative play area. The city's recreation department would use the facilities in the summer.

Total cost has been put at $50,000. The team created the nonprofit fund "Friends of Berg Jones" to receive contributions, and in summer 1987 the in-kind donations began to flow: engineering design, sports management advice, sand, telephone polls, steel pipe, soccer equipment, welding, and painting.

The soccer field opened on a Saturday in late September, coinciding with the first fund raiser—an outdoor fair.

"It will probably take us three or four years to complete the whole project," predicts Berg Jones principal Gregory Hobson, an MCAE member. "But we already have a faculty member, from the Caribbean, who can coach soccer, and we think next year our students will be ready for some competition." □

Meet:



David Kohl

Transporting Precious Cargo

Helen Cottongim, president of the Kentucky Education Support Personnel Association (KESPA), drives a school bus through northern Kentucky's rural Boone County, about six hours every weekday. She's had the same main routes for 16 years, delivering public and parochial K-12 students to and from their classes.

NEA Today *staffer Diane Dismuke recently spent a day riding Cottongim's bus and talking with her about her love for her job and her commitment to gaining better job conditions for school support employees.*

You greet the kids by name as they board your bus. Do you know them all?
Just about. And my job gives me a unique opportunity to make or break their day. Sometimes a kid may get up late, not have breakfast, Mom may be mad.... If I'm grouchy, it's going to reinforce the bad mood. So I always try to be pleasant. If I see a child has been crying, I smile to show that everything will be all right. Sometimes I post amusing photos—like an old one of me wearing a beehive hairdo—above the front window. The kids get a kick out of that. On Halloween I dress as a witch.

You permit music on the bus?
The kids bring in their tapes and I play them on a tape recorder with two speakers that I control. We play rock in the morning and country in the afternoon.

The kids really pay attention to the tapes. Once I tried to trick them by playing a tape I'd made on a pay machine in Nashville. They all asked, "Who's *that* singing?"

Your bus has no student seat belts. How do you feel about that?
I prefer it this way. Studies show that seatbelts do little to improve bus safety. In an emergency, I don't think young children could unhook a belt and free themselves. Panic confuses kids. I know children who don't recognize their homes if I drive three feet past their driveways. Imagine what would happen in a critical situation where time is of the essence. Also, seat belts are a terrible expense—about $1,000 per bus—and how are you going to make kids wear them?

What can teachers and parents do to make your job easier?
They could better understand our responsibility and the conditions under which we work. Bus drivers can't afford to make a mistake.

We're driving 60 kids on a vehicle about 35 feet long and 10 feet wide. Parents sometimes ask why we don't see what happened during a squabble involving their child. Well, we might have been turning the bus around, or watching other traffic.

Also, kids shouldn't be transporting anything too big for them to carry—especially anything made of glass. If a driver has to unbuckle his or her seat belt, get out of the driver's seat, get a kid off the bus, and hand him or her a box, everyone else on the bus is in jeopardy. Drivers should never have to leave their seat. Also, boxes blocking the aisle can mean the difference between life and death in an emergency.

What's your most dangerous on-the-job situation?
Most dangerous are the distractions *within* the bus. In Kentucky, the very few children who have died in school bus accidents have been killed either by motorists who passed a stopped school bus or by their very own bus. Probably nine times out of ten, the driver let the child off the bus, was distracted by some student problem on the bus, and assumed the child had crossed the road. But if that child has a paper that blows away, and that paper has an "A" on it, you can be sure the child will walk back in front of the bus to retrieve it.

What kind of training do school bus drivers get?
Before taking a road test, we receive 20 hours of instruction—double the state requirement mandated in 1984—in such subjects as laws and regulations, driving fundamentals, maintenance, critical situations, first aid, and pupil management. I'm well informed on all this, since I'm the course instructor! I also take a six-hour course every year to keep abreast of changes in legislation and the like.

Things were a lot different when I applied for my job 16 years ago. The transportation director took me for an eight-mile road test. That was it!

Are drivers responsible for bus maintenance?
No, but we're trained to detect problems. We can call for help on our CB radios. We are responsible for cleaning our buses inside and out, though. We feel clean buses convey a positive image of the schools.

What do you like most about your job?
I like the kids, but I *love* the bus. I've been infatuated with large vehicles ever since I was nine and learned to drive by operating my father's tractor. I'm more comfortable driving the bus than any other vehicle—and in snow, it's the easiest thing to manage.

You're very involved in the politics of your job.
Yes. Before KESPA was formed two years ago, classified employees in Boone County were unorganized, but we did have a local Bus Drivers Representative Committee, which I chaired. This was an ad hoc committee that met with administrators to talk about job problems. We made some improvements; Boone County has an upbeat board of education.

I've been involved with KESPA from its beginning and was elected its first president last June. My two-year term started in September.

What would you say are the main concerns of Kentucky school support personnel?
Well, our main goal is to get a law guaranteeing us job security. In our county alone there are some 400 support workers, each hired on a year-to-year basis. Every spring the board sends us a "letter of intent" that asks whether we want to keep our job for the coming year. If we do, we're "reasonably assured" we'll have it. This is the basis for a lifetime career. School employees are not usually here today and gone tomorrow. I know most of our bus drivers have been driving their buses for at least 10 years.

Do you think all school employees have the same concerns?
We have the same basic needs: clothing, shelter, food, and money to send our children to college. But we have individual needs too. For example, teachers are interested in class size; we bus drivers are interested in not having an overload on the bus, fair evaluation, and equalization of the routes.

Have you ever had a really dangerous situation on your bus?
I've been lucky. I've never had a really critical situation involving my bus. But about 14 years ago, I went through a period when I didn't think I could handle the responsibility of having so many children in my care. I'd read a magazine article about a school bus that drove in front of a train. It told how the day started for the driver and the kids. I kept relating it to myself. Finally I decided I was a good driver and that my chances of having an accident were no greater or less than anyone else's.

But I've never forgotten that article—and I think it's good that I keep it tucked away in the back of my mind. It reminds me of my vulnerability and my responsibility to be as vigilant as possible. □

IN THE CLASSROOM

BEYOND ELITISM:

Calculus, algorithms, trigonometry—once the enclave of a white male student elite—are reaching new populations as resourceful teachers turn girls and minorities on to the joys and challenges of mathematics.

It's a stereotype that's been around ever since the first bespectacled white male fastened a slide rule to his belt and overloaded his plastic pocket pouch with number 2 pencils. The "nerd," the "brain" who's more interested in algorithms than in whether his left and right socks match. The math whiz who walks to the beat of a different drummer.

Such stereotypes would predispose us to believe math expertise is the domain of the socially dysfunctional white male. But if NEA members have their way, such assumptions may soon become as outmoded as the belted slide rule. Educators the nation over are now advising students of both sexes and all races that the lucrative job opportunities tend to be in chemistry, physics, computer technology, engineering—and that the language of these fields is math.

Why has success in mathematics traditionally been very much a white male story? An Institute for Educational Leadership study shows that the participation and performance of many minority and female youngsters in math begin to decline as early as fourth grade.

Minorities and women also tend not to enroll in advanced secondary school math classes. Among college-bound seniors, for example, the proportion of Black and Hispanic females who have taken four or more years of mathematics courses is consistently 15 to 20 percent lower than the rate for white males.

The gender gap in math achievement is especially puzzling. The term "math anxiety" was coined to address a discomfort associated specifically with girls (*see box at right*). Yet one thing is clear: boys are not innately better at math than girls. The Educational Testing Service, the nation's largest testmaker, recently compared the math capabilities of boys and girls through three large-scale studies. One study showed that 13-year-old girls actually perform *better* than boys in spatial visualization tasks and in computation tasks. The other two studies, for algebra and problem-solving tasks, showed no performance differences by sex.

On the question of race, by middle school years, a clear-cut hierarchy has generally asserted itself, according to ETS surveys: Asian students usually outperform whites, with both outperforming Hispanics, who outperform Blacks.

Why do girls and most minority students turn in a weaker math performance than white males? Researchers suggest several reasons:

► Attitudes are critical. Low achievement among women and minorities may result from their believing that mathematics is a white male domain.

► The influence of "significant others" cannot be overstated. Teachers and counselors can have strong positive effects on students' attitudes toward math. Students cite the need for math teachers who will give them extra help, explain things carefully, and encourage them in their studies.

► Minority and female students often are not encouraged at an early age to develop the determination to persist in the face of conflict—a prerequisite for success in science and mathematics.

► Students' perceptions of the utility of mathematics may be off-base. Minority students and girls tend to be less likely to understand how mathematics will be useful in their future jobs or postsecondary schooling.

► Minority and female students are often not encouraged to follow math-and-science-related career paths by teachers, counselors, or parents.

► Standardized test data may be misused in predicting achievement and assessing ability, resulting in many minority students' being tracked into classes for which teachers have low expectations.

Ben De Soto

Houston's 'Say Yes to a Youngster's Future' project helps get inner-city kindergarten students off to a playful start with numerical competencies.

In Pat Gabriel's fifth period freshman geometry class at the Thomas Jefferson School for Science and Technology in northern Virginia's Fairfax County, six girls comprise two rows of the male-dominated classroom. They arrive in an energetic gaggle, plopping down pastel notebooks and parking Reebok-shod feet beneath their desks.

Earlier in the year, they've explored geometry's usefulness in art, creating colorful designs including the two reprinted on these pages. Today they're studying postulates.

"If two points of a line lie in a plane, then the line lies in the same plane," says Gabriel. "If a line intersects a plane but does not lie in the plane, it intersects the plane in one point."

As Gabriel drills her students, both boys and girls call out answers and questions. Thomas Jefferson, a special public school for gifted math and science students, has worked hard to recruit girls—and minority students—since it opened three years ago.

The number of girls at Thomas Jefferson has increased from 32 to 37 percent since 1984. Strides in recruiting minorities have been less respectable. Of the school's 26 percent minority population, 21 percent are Asians. Only 3 percent are Black and 2 percent Hispanic.

To turn those figures around, school and county officials have launched an aggressive recruitment effort to identify high-achieving elementary and middle school students and invite them to take TJ's challenging aptitude test.

At the same time, teachers like Pat Gabriel are beginning to watch the signals they put out as they explain geometric concepts or remind students of upcoming math competitions. Notes math department chair Edward Anderson: "We're learning to examine the unconscious cues we're providing, so that the shy girl in the back of the room or the hesitant minority student won't be left out."

Joe Di Dio

NEA Vice President Keith Geiger says teacher attitudes are key.

Unconscious cues. Subtle behaviors. The myriad little habits and traditions that have undergirded the typical math class *need* reform. That's the view of NEA Vice-President Keith Geiger, a former Livonia, Mich., math and science teacher who's convinced that teacher expectations have a lot to do with who is and is not performing up to par in today's math classes.

"It's easy for us to give our attention to the quick thinkers, the ones who've earned our confidence by routinely giving us right answers," says Geiger. "I'm suggesting we need to look at the way we're relating to *all* students. We should be taking pains to get full participation."

The time teachers give to waiting for an answer in class—generally about 2.8 seconds, according to most studies—is not enough for some students to process mathematical information.

Geiger recommends more patience—and a blend of hands-on activities that appeal to all intellectual types, from the most spatially perceptive to the most highly kinesthetic learners.

"You can spend a day having your class read about similar triangles or you

Sweaty Palms and Fears of Forgetting

"Why is a smart girl like you counting on your fingers?" queried university educator and author Sheila Tobias in a 1976 *Ms.* magazine article. A resulting flurry of letters to the editor convinced her she'd set ideological brush fires.

Suddenly feminists, academicians, and school counselors seemed to be onto the "task-specific disabilities" Tobias went on to chronicle in *Overcoming Math Anxiety* (Houghton Mifflin, 1978). Her continuing research on highly verbal, otherwise successful (usually female) math avoiders has led to a new book, *Succeed With Math: Every Student's Guide to Conquering Math Anxiety,* being released this month by College Board Publications and distributed by Macmillan.

Tobias, now a visiting scholar at the University of Arizona, cites these underlying causes of math anxiety:

► Teachers must confront the **built-in passivity** that comes from the mistaken belief that math ability is somehow innate.

► Students who've experienced some **early trauma** in math class (slow thinking in front of peers; an embarrassing mistake at the chalkboard) experience sweaty palms and related anxieties in successive grades.

► Students often develop a **fear that they'll forget** the essential formula they need to do their work, or some foundational knowledge needed to move ahead. They lack the coping skills that enable them to improvise alternate strategies when they forget.

► Students' **predilections for the liberal arts** often lead them to believe they can't have quantitative ability as well.

► Mathematics is perceived to be an extremely rigid discipline that precludes creative thinking. Students are not led to use divergent thinking and a playful, inquisitive, improvisational approach because of their fixation on **getting the "right answer."**

The common denominator in all these stumbling blocks, counsels Tobias, is the student's fear of losing control. "Informed and sensitive teachers," she suggests, "can recognize feelings of helplessness that students display, and build in them a sense of control." —*V.L.*

IN THE CLASSROOM

MATH LITERACY FOR ALL

Carolyn Salisbury

Calculus guru Jaime Escalante's Hispanic students set records.

can go outside and compare a measurement of you and your shadow and the flagpole and its shadow," he suggests.

The typical math textbook also needs to be examined, Geiger contends, to find ways to overcome biases the predominantly white male authors create.

"We have to look for ways to relate to the varied racial, ethnic, and gender makeup of math classes," adds Geiger, "by adapting word problems and creating nonsexist, culturally relevant examples."

NEA member Jaime Escalante may have done more than any other teacher to challenge the stereotypes about math and minorities.

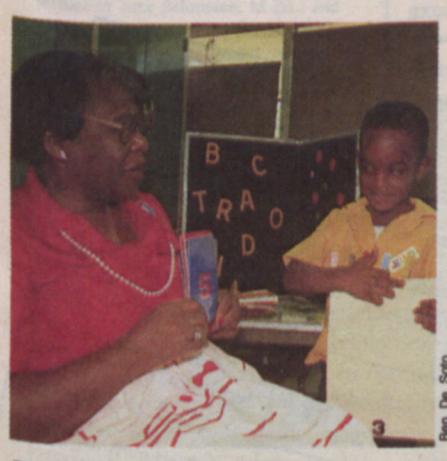
Escalante's specialty at Garfield High in East Los Angeles is Advanced Placement Calculus—a subject taken by about 15 percent of Garfield's 3,400 students. (Nationally, only 1 percent of all high school students take calculus.)

At least 95 percent of Escalante's students are Mexican-Americans, and 60 percent are female. Last May, their performance on the highly competitive College Board-sponsored high school advanced placement calculus exam ranked them fourth among all schools nationwide.

Motivation is second nature to Escalante, who displays a sign beneath his classroom clock that reads: "Determination + Discipline + Hard Work = Way to Success." Escalante's classroom walls are covered with posters of athletic stars, and he uses sports analogies to convey calculus concepts.

The Los Angeles teacher is modest about his success.

"I present a learning environment that's conducive to the development of *ganas*—desire," Escalante explains. "I play classical music to relax students at the opening of class, use teaching toys, and speak in the language of the athletic field, all in an effort to show that doing math is fun. And when it's fun, the students make gains."



Ben De Soto

Houston's Millie Washington makes math motivation a family affair for her kindergartners.

Getting students to build a good foundation for math achievement in high school requires early intervention. Educators in inner-city Houston are hoping to steer young minority students into an early appreciation of math skills that will serve them a lifetime. The key to the Houston effort is "Say Yes to a Youngster's Future," a three-phase pilot initiative to develop the math and science skills of Black, Hispanic, Native American, and female students.

Started in 1985 by the National Urban Coalition, the current effort is backed by the Shell Oil Company Foundation and seeks to integrate provocative approaches to math and science into public school curriculums for kindergarten through sixth grade.

Association member Millie Washington, a kindergarten teacher at Houston's Frost Elementary School, is one of five teachers involved in "Say Yes" who will be going beyond the classroom to engender math interest. The heart of the program: an attempt to involve parents more actively in their children's math education.

Washington and her colleagues provide parents a special family math textbook to help them coach students at home. Parents are asked to come to school with their children for intensive 4½-hour sessions on math concepts. Alternate months, parents and children build on classroom work through visits to museums and other educational sites.

"When parents show an interest in students' math achievement, motivation can only improve," says Washington. "You can see it in students' eyes, in their test scores, and in their whole attitude toward school when parents are by their side to show that they think math success matters."

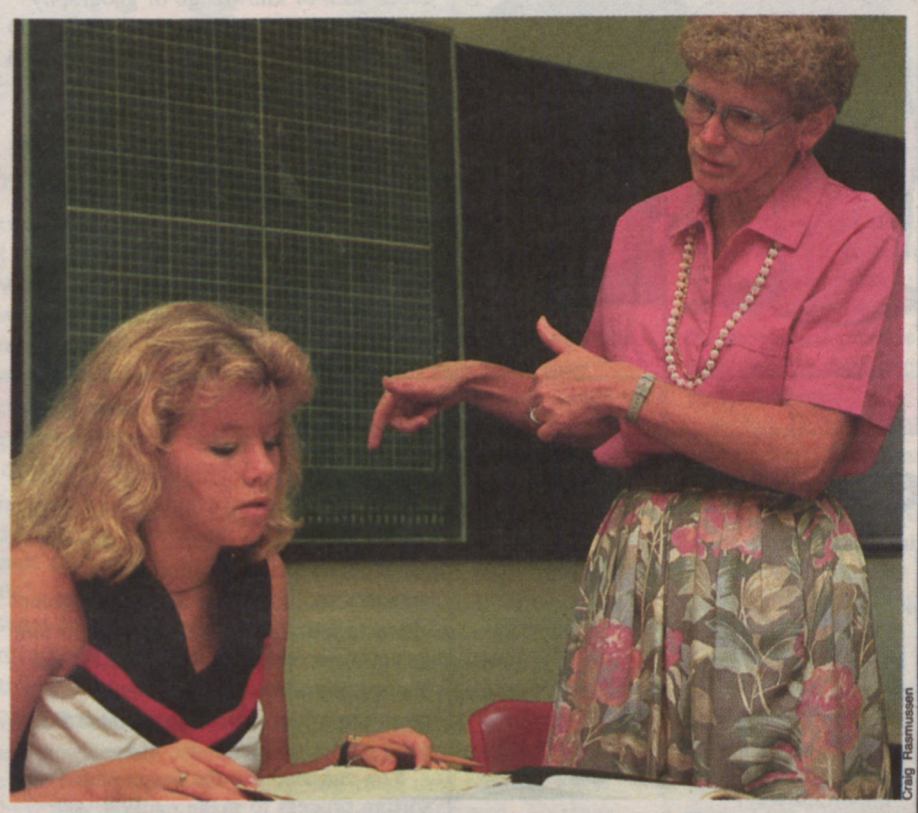
Encouragement is certainly one factor that convinces girls or minority students to pursue math seriously. The presence of positive role models is another.

Studies show that females who view mathematics achievement as appropriate for girls outperform those who view mathematics as a male domain. And it's been shown for both women and minorities that self-perceptions of ability in mathematics and self-expectations are closely related.

Unfortunately, positive role models for girls and minority youngsters are in short supply. Math teaching has been a white male preserve, recruiting its members in a self-perpetuating cycle that reflects the disinclination of girls and minorities to pursue higher math.

That cycle must be broken, and breaking it starts with a national resolve—a commitment by policymakers, education administrators, parents, and teachers. It ends with an indispensable resource: math achievement unrestrained by race or gender.

—Vicky Lytle



Craig Rasmussen

Changing times? In recent years, girls have come to outnumber boys in Rita Fugate's senior pre-calculus course at Jefferson City (Mo.) High School.

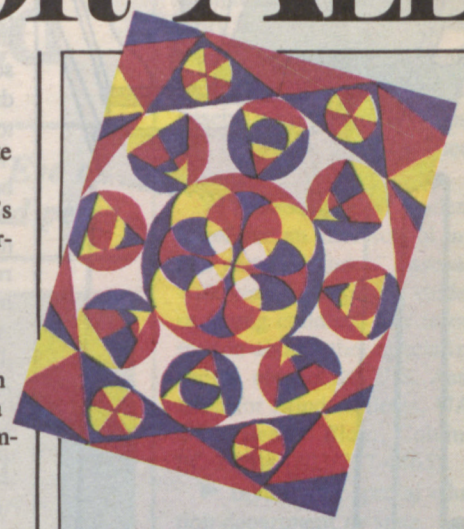
Tell It to the Task Force

In 1986, the U.S. Congress passed Public Law 99-383, authorizing the creation of a task force on women, minorities, and the handicapped in science and engineering. This interagency body seeks exemplary programs that foster math talent as a means for women, minorities, and disabled people to succeed in these white-male-dominated professions.

Educators are invited to participate in a series of open hearings: Dec. 1, Kansas City; Jan. 14, Los Angeles; March 2, Atlanta; April 7, Boston; May 4, Baltimore.

If you're interested in testifying or corresponding about your efforts, write to Sue Kemnitzer, Executive Director, Task Force on Women, Minorities, and the Handicapped in Science and Technology, 330 C St., S.W., Washington, DC 20201.

—V.L.



MATHCOUNTS... And So Does Fun

Math and play converge and intersect at schools across the country where there's a serious effort underway to broaden the appeal of computational skills.

Nationally, the concept of "mathletes" has been pioneered through a competitive program called MATHCOUNTS, sponsored by the National Society of Professional Engineers, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), the CNA Insurance Companies, NASA, and the U.S. Department of Education. In one MATHCOUNTS competition, seventh and eighth grade students compete in rapid-fire drills on everything from statistics to consumer math in citywide, regional, and national contests. Last year's competition, the program's second, attracted 700,000 participants.

Notes NCTM President John Dossey, "The focus of MATHCOUNTS has been to reach students, particularly in inner cities, at the junior high level, when their interest in math starts to drift. MATHCOUNTS is an effort to show all students that math can be fun, exciting, and a springboard to professional achievement."

At Canton (Mass.) High School, ever since the 1950s, extracurricular math teams have been providing the element of sport, competition, and social structure students relish. Massachusetts is one of at least 24 states with citywide and statewide competitions leading up to the annual American Regional Mathematics League competition.

Canton's 29-member team, which boasts 17 girls, gets together three times a week to train for this rigorous series of meets, where problems ranging from algebra to trigonometry are posed during a series of timed exercises.

"Every effort is made to provide a social experience—as a sports activity or social club does—so that students from all backgrounds will want to belong," says math department chair Martin Badoian.

That strategy works. The math team's nonmath activities—from selling refreshments at New England Patriots' football games to selling doughnuts and orange juice to students before school—have strengthened the bonds of math ability.

—V.L.

IDEA EXCHANGE

Socrates, To Go

Several times a week for three years, Tonya Huber Emeigh's eighth-graders at Hollidaysburg (Pa.) Area Junior High School used to "brown bag it with books."

At the beginning of each school year, Emeigh (now a graduate assistant in curriculum and instruction) wrote to the parents of each student, inviting their child to bring a lunch and take part in a series of noontime programs through the year. Programs featured literary discussions, videos on literary topics, taped readings of classic works—and the trial of Socrates.

To prepare for what Emeigh still considers the most successful brown bag event, students read Plato's *Apology* and *Crito* from the Junior Great Books Series. Three judges chosen by the class presided over a four-day trial that held the attention of students throughout the school. In the end, Socrates did not drink the hemlock—but only after a tough court fight.

"I had frustrations over providing the best learning experiences for students, and a lot of our discussions didn't seem to end when the bell rang," Emeigh recalls. "This was an ideal way to lengthen the school day, for up to 115 students. And I don't think I ever had to discipline anybody in a 'brown bagger'—it wasn't like the cafeteria."

Living the Legend

What Evelyn Rosser calls "premature praise" is right on time as motivation for her students—especially the average or remedial ones—at Valdosta (Ga.) High School. Rosser starts out each fall by explaining that this is one of her brightest classes for the year, so they'll be tackling a range of challenging activities.

Students are horrified when they hear the list, Rosser says—but as weeks pass, "to their own amazement, most do succeed."

Rosser particularly remembers a class of remedial literature students she taught at Noonan High School some years ago who wanted first to read, then to perform a three-act play. When Rosser agreed—reluctantly—the students not only learned their parts but secured costumes, music, props, programs, and refreshments, and invited the principal.

The principal could hardly believe this was the remedial class Rosser was supposed to be teaching that period. "I had given these students perfunctory praise on the first day of the semester," Rosser says, "but they had trusted me and believed every word I said."

Rallying Round Research

Two years ago communications teacher Sonora Knott and librarian Patsy Springer of Mark Keppel High School in Alhambra, Calif., set out to repair students' lack of knowledge of geography and map skills. Knott made up about 150 questions requiring the use of atlases and almanacs, and the library held simultaneous four-week contests—the Rainbow Reference Rally—for students and adults in the school to find the answers.

All month the school library and nearby public libraries were full of teenagers and adults poring over reference works. The Rally concluded with a celebration for all involved, with refreshments, awards, photographers, and clamoring school reporters. Last year's Rally dealt with the humanities.

"The projects provoke considerable excitement—and they teach our students precision and perseverance in research," says Association member Knott. To help other schools start rallies of their own, she's offering a complete set of materials on either topic—including questionnaire, answer sheet, procedures, sample memos and press releases, and a list of prizes—for $10 to NEA members who write to her at Mark Keppel High, 501 E. Hellman, Alhambra, CA 91801. □

If you're using a new classroom activity—or a new twist on an old one—and it works wonders, why not share it with your colleagues across the country? Send a brief description (along with any photos, sketches, or charts that would help to explain it) to Idea Exchange, *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

RESEARCH CLUES

'Inside-Out' Research

by Robert McNergney and Martin Haberman

It's a good thing David E. Hunt lives in Canada and probably won't catch you reading this column. Hunt, an eminent education and psychology researcher at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, thinks teachers can teach themselves and the education professors more than we professors can teach them. The nerve!

In his recent book, *Beginning with Ourselves*, Hunt argues that when it comes to understanding and improving teacher-student interaction in classrooms, teachers should begin by making explicit their own implicit understandings of what their students are like. They should work from the "inside-out," he says, holding in abeyance ideas about teaching and learning that come from the "outside-in," i.e., from experts.

Here's how such a self-examination might begin with respect to teachers' thoughts and beliefs about students:

1. Take six slips of paper and number them consecutively.
2. Write the name of one student on each slip.
3. Pull out slips 1, 2, and 3 and answer this question about the students named: "Which two of these three students are most alike as students in some important way?"
4. In a word or phrase, describe the characteristic the two students have in common. (They might, for example, be "aggressive," "witty," "shy," "poor readers," whatever.)
5. Take a full sheet of paper and divide it into three vertical columns headed "Student Characteristics," "Desired Learning Outcomes," and "Teaching Approaches."
6. Enter the common characteristic you identified from your first student triad under the heading, "Student Characteristics."
7. Now regroup the six slips three more times—into 4,5,6; 1,3,5; 2,4,6. Find the two students in each triad who are most alike and write the word or phrase that characterizes them under the "Student Characteristics" column on the chart.

If you keep coming up with the same characteristic, select a new triad—say, 3,4,5—and do the comparison again. Or add more students to the pool. You should try to end up with four different student characteristics.

With four, you'll have a short list of the student learning characteristics that are important to you—what might be termed your "implicit theory" about students. If you keep coming up with the same characteristic in more than one comparison, it may be that some student characteristics are much more important to you than others. Ask yourself if the student characteristics you listed really seem important. For the students? For you?

You can also use the seven-step sorting process to make explicit your implicit theories about "Desired Learning Outcomes" and "Teaching Approaches." The only difference is that instead of listing students you must begin by writing down on each slip a learning outcome or teaching approach.

As the examples in the chart below suggest, teachers' thoughts about students, learning outcomes, and teaching approaches can be usefully fitted together. If yours don't fit, it might be time to change your thinking in one area—or even all three.

Don't be fooled: this is not pop psychology. And this exercise is not, of course, the only way to understand your own thinking about students.

For some time now, researchers have been using a variety of methods to understand how and why teachers think as they do and to identify connections between their judgments and their actions. Knowledge derived from these efforts promises to shape the course of teacher education in the years ahead. □

Robert McNergney is associate professor at the Curry School of Education, University of Virginia; Martin Haberman is professor at the School of Education, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. They prepared this column for NEA Today *with the cooperation of the American Educational Research Association.*

***Beginning with Ourselves: In Practice, Theory, and Human Affairs*, by David E. Hunt, is available from Brookline Books, P.O. Box 1046, Cambridge, MA 02238, for $17.95 prepaid.**

Student Characteristics	Desired Learning Outcomes	Teaching Approaches
Aggressive	To control aggression	Provide reward and encouragement for appropriate behavior
Cooperative	To serve as a role model	Provide visibility, e.g., as leader of small groups
Poor reading skills	To become an independent reader	Use their own anecdotes as reading material

RESOURCES

TV Movie Shows How Prejudice Hurts the Visually Handicapped

Alert teachers can make good use of NBC-TV's upcoming "Eye on the Sparrow" to help students better understand their disabled peers.

A soon-to-air NBC World Premiere Movie of the Week can easily become the centerpiece of classroom discussions and activities designed to sensitize students to the realities faced by those whose vision is impaired. (Broadcast date for "Eye on the Sparrow" has not been set as we go to press, but the movie is expected to air in prime time during December. Watch your local TV listings for exact date and time.)

The two-hour, closed-captioned movie brings to life the true story of Ethel Hallars Lee, a blind woman fighting prejudice. We see Ethel growing up during the 1930s and 1940s—decades before the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 guaranteed handicapped youngsters the right to attend local public schools. For Ethel, going to school means having to leave home.

As an adult, Ethel again feels the sting of discrimination when she and her husband are told their visual impairments preclude their adopting a child.

You may want to clip and save the following suggestions for capitalizing on "Eye on the Sparrow" in your classroom. NBC-TV will distribute a more comprehensive viewers' guide* to all junior high schools by Nov. 16. Copies are also available from local NBC stations.

Grade Level: 5 through 9.

Subject Areas: Social studies, special education.

General Objective: To increase student understanding of visually impaired and other physically handicapped persons, who tend to be limited far more by other people's prejudices than by their own disabilities.

Suggestions for Background Assignments:
Ask students to research how mainstreaming works in your school district.

► What types of handicaps are covered by P.L. 94-142? How many students are there currently in each category?

► What is meant by the principle of the "least restrictive" classroom environment?

► In what way(s), and to what degree, are students with handicaps integrated with other students?

► What happens to handicapped students who aren't mainstreamed?

► What special accommodations and services are offered to ensure that handicapped students have the same access as other students to all educational benefits?

Gary Null/NBC

Mare Winningham and Keith Carradine star as a blind couple trying to adopt sighted children in "Eye on the Sparrow," a made-for-TV movie airing on NBC in December.

Pre-Viewing Activities

► Have students make cardboard blinders to limit their vision. Ask them to wear their blinders as they go about their normal school day, and then to write about their sensations and experiences.

► Blindfold students and ask them to negotiate an obstacle course in the classroom. If possible, borrow a laser cane so they can determine whether advanced technology makes a difference.

► Be sure students wear the blinders or blindfolds long enough to evoke some common emotions like frustration, fear, boredom, and restlessness.

► Ask your special education department to provide braille equipment, samples of braille writing, and guides to decipher the code. Then have students create braille with either a braillewriter (a device similar to a typewriter) or a braille slate and stylus.

► Learning to read by feeling small dots requires great sensitivity of touch. To show students that unfamiliar objects aren't easy to identify by touch alone, ask a blindfolded student to identify a classmate solely by touching his or her hand—and to explain what cues he or she is using. Remind the class that the sense of touch is only one way a young blind child learns about unfamiliar objects.

► If someone can't see colors, can he or she taste them? Ask students to bring to class foods that they feel convey a particular color through their taste. (Try jelly beans and other candies.) Discuss whether it's important for visually impaired persons to learn about color.

► Blindfold students, hand them a wallet and some money, and ask them to pretend to pay their way at a restaurant. They may not have trouble identifying coins, but what can they do to differentiate between bills?

► Locate and play a recording of "His Eye Is on the Sparrow," the gospel song from which the title of the movie was taken. Ask students to listen for the tune as it recurs throughout the movie and prepare for a post-viewing discussion about its symbolism.

► Ask students to think about several questions as they watch the movie: How do the Lees dispel the myth that disabled persons can't take care of themselves? Does the government provide handicapped persons with all the help they need? Why are social service agencies, set up to help people, also in a position to cause harm? What qualities displayed by the Lees indicate whether they would make good or bad parents?

Post-Viewing Discussions
Share with your students these tips for getting to know visually handicapped persons.

1. Speak directly to a visually impaired person—never through a third person.
2. Identify yourself before offering assistance.
3. If a visually impaired person needs help crossing a street, he or she will take your arm and follow the motion of your body. You don't have to push or lead.
4. Feel free to use words like "look" and "see," since they're part of everyone's vocabulary.
5. Don't pet a guide dog, lest it be distracted from leading its owner.
6. When you finish a conversation with a visually impaired person, tell him or her that you're leaving.

Post-Viewing Activities

► Show your students how visually impaired persons play sports. Try to get special equipment from educators who work with the visually impaired, and let your students use it. For example, there are baseballs that give off beeps and base pads that emit special sounds.

► Encourage your students to referee an after-school informal game of "beep" baseball with visually impaired students or young children. For information about other specialized sports, contact the U.S. Association for Blind Athletes, UAF-USC, Benson Bldg., Columbia, SC 29208 (803/777-4465).

► Invite your special education department or state rehabilitation agency to give a classroom demonstration of the new laser and ultrasound technologies that are helping visually impaired persons read and get around better. Be sure to discuss the price of each device and the availability of funding.

► Ask students to identify successful men and women who are visually impaired. While the list of famous people may be short, many successful people with visual handicaps probably work in your area as teachers, lawyers, data processors, and performing and visual artists. You can get local referrals from the American Council of the Blind (800/424-8666, weekdays, 3-5 p.m. ET). If possible, invite several visually impaired guests to your classroom for a panel discussion. Before they arrive, review the tips in the preceding section for getting acquainted with a visually impaired person. □

Need Additional Resources?

American Foundation for the Blind
15 West 16th St.
New York, NY 10011
800/232-5463

American Printing House for the Blind
1800 Frankfort Ave.
Louisville, KY 40206
502/895-2405

Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Handicapped
206 N. Washington St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
703/836-6060

National Federation for the Blind
655 15th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20005
202/639-4028

Recording for the Blind, Inc.
20 Roszel Rd.
Princeton, N.J. 08540
605/452-0606

Special Education Technology Center
Council for Exceptional Children
1900 Association Dr.
Reston, VA 22091
703/620-3660

Written by June Behrmann, M.Ed., and produced for the National Broadcasting Company, Inc., by KIDSNET, Washington, D.C. Permission granted to copy for classroom use.

Sign Up for Free Viewers' Guides

Would you like to receive complimentary viewers' guides to future broadcasts appropriate for K-12 students?

In cooperation with the television industry and KIDSNET (the national computerized clearinghouse for children's TV and radio), NEA is now compiling a mailing list of Association members interested in receiving these guides as they become available. To get on the list, send your name, curriculum area, grade, and mailing address to Viewers' Guide, NEA Communications, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. □

TECH TALK

Will Computers Make Bureaucrats Out of Teachers?

There seems to be a movement afoot right now to make computer software correspond more closely with the curriculum, reports one of the top observers of the school technology scene, *Classroom Computer Learning* editor Holly Brady.

The idea of books and other supplementary materials conforming to the curriculum isn't new, of course. But in computers such conformity *is* a fairly recent trend.

"Up to this point," Brady notes, "education software's been developed by small publishers, working with teachers who have expertise in a certain area. Together they've produced some very nice standalone programs."

Now Brady sees a strong push to make software fit more closely with the curriculum.

"I have no problem with that idea in the abstract," she says, "but I do think some people are carrying it way too far. Their idea of coordinating software with curriculum seems to be to chop the curriculum into tiny, discrete pieces and deliver the entire basic curriculum over the computer screen."

Adds Brady: "These same people—some in big business, others in state and federal government—are saying that teachers are going to see their role change from deliverers of instruction to *managers* of instruction."

What's wrong with that scenario? Most teachers would probably agree with Brady's assessment: "It's folly to believe you can truly educate young people by breaking down the curriculum into 2,821 discrete facts and delivering each separately. That's not what education is all about. Anybody who's ever had a really good teacher would be appalled at the thought of turning that teacher into a bureaucrat who spends each day checking students' individual computer scores and prescribing new bits of knowledge to be delivered via the computer the next day."

Learning, stresses Brady, depends fundamentally on human interaction.

"You may be able to teach certain facts via the computer," she notes, "but you can't teach passion for a subject, or for learning in general."

Schools, says Brady, should not try to force the computer to conform to the curriculum as it now stands.

"The best individual computer programs *push* the curriculum, in a very positive way," explains Brady. "In science, for example, the computer is able to make some very abstract concepts much more concrete. I've seen physics software that includes a simulation of various gases and what happens when they're heated. When you decrease the size of the container the gas is in, you see those gas molecules jumping up against the sides faster and faster. Teachers have never been able to do that before—they could show it in a movie, but not interactively."

Another new program, adds Brady, hooks the computer to a microphone and allows students to make a sound into the mike, then see and manipulate the actual sound waves.

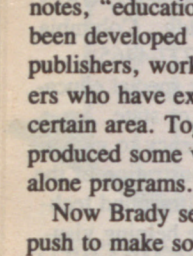
"Another good example is word processing," says Brady. "Writing changes dramatically when you switch to a word processor. With a pen or a typewriter you got so mired in the details that you couldn't keep up with the flow of your ideas. With a word processor, you get each sentence right as you go, because it's so easy to make those corrections right now. For kids in particular, who have such a hard time with the details of writing, it's really a substantial change."

The great promise of classroom computers, Brady concludes, is their ability to allow teachers to do things they've *not* been able to do before.

"That's where we should all be focusing our attention—instead of trying to have computers deliver basic curriculum and turning the teacher into a sort of bureaucrat."

The bottom line, Brady says, is that there *is* a place for computers in the classroom—and that place is as tools in the hands of good teachers, not as replacements for the teachers themselves.

—Ann Kurzius



Holly Brady taught high school English outside Dayton, Ohio, and has also taught at the elementary and preschool levels. A former editor at Learning magazine, Brady's spent the past four years as editor of Classroom Computer Learning, a magazine published monthly during the school year from the San Francisco Bay area. For subscription information, call 800/543-4383 (in Ohio, call collect 513/294-5785).

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YOU AND THE LAW

As AIDS Crisis Spreads, Legal Questions Multiply

In Arcadia, Fla., this fall, boycotts, bomb threats, and a suspicious fire forced one family to withdraw its three AIDS-virus-carrying sons from school and move out of town. Parental protests over AIDS-infected students have also erupted in a dozen other states.

The AIDS crisis raises a host of new and difficult legal issues. Can a school district refuse to admit a student with acquired immune deficiency syndrome, or suspend or fire an employee with AIDS? Can a school employee refuse to teach or provide other services to a student with AIDS? Can a district require that students or employees be tested for the AIDS virus?

While there is no simple answer to these complex questions, court decisions to date suggest that both students and school employees enjoy a significant measure of protection against discrimination based on AIDS infection.

In the relatively few cases involving students decided so far, the courts uniformly have held that students diagnosed as having AIDS or ARC (AIDS Related Complex) should be admitted to the regular classroom setting. Decisions in these cases have relied on state or federal laws prohibiting discrimination against handicapped students.

In each case, the court accepted medical evidence that the infected students posed no risks to other students or employees. Both NEA and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have recommended that infected students be admitted to the regular school setting unless a team of qualified professionals determines that special medical or behavioral problems create a risk of transmission.

Can a school employer fire or take other adverse action against an AIDS-infected employee? Although the CDC says there is no medical reason to remove an AIDS-infected employee from the school setting, a few school districts have tried to do so.

The courts have not yet addressed this question, but it appears that—like students—infected employees are protected by laws prohibiting discrimination against handicapped persons.

By far the most important case in this area was decided by the U.S. Supreme Court a few months ago. In *School Board of Nassau County, Florida v. Arline*, elementary school teacher Gene Arline sued her school board after being fired for suffering a tuberculosis relapse. She relied on §504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits recipients of federal funds from discriminating against handicapped persons.

The courts have uniformly held that students diagnosed as having AIDS should be admitted to the regular classroom.

In a 7-2 decision, the Supreme Court held that a person infected with a contagious disease, such as tuberculosis, is a "handicapped individual" protected from discrimination by §504. The Court rejected the Reagan Administration's argument that an employer's unfounded fear of contagion could serve as a legitimate basis for discharge.

The Supreme Court sent the case back to the trial court for a hearing on whether Arline's condition posed a significant risk of infecting others in the workplace. In deciding that question, the Court said, the trial court "should defer to the reasonable medical judgments of public health officials." Even if the infectious employee does pose a risk, the Court added, the school district must consider a transfer, reassignment, or other reasonable accommodation short of termination to minimize the risk.

The Court said in a footnote that it was not deciding whether a person infected with the AIDS virus is covered under §504, but the Court's analysis in *Arline* arguably would be applicable to the claim of a teacher with AIDS.

There is one stumbling block to school employees making a claim under §504. In a 1984 case called *Grove City*, the Supreme Court said that §504 covers only employees who can show that the specific program where they are employed receives federal money. NEA has been working hard for passage of federal legislation to overturn *Grove City*, and there is a realistic chance that Congress may act favorably.

Most states also outlaw employment discrimination against handicapped persons, and, as of December 1986, 22 states had declared AIDS a handicap under applicable state law.

Can school employees refuse to provide educational services to a student with AIDS? Probably not, at least where the infected student has been examined and approved for admission by an assessment team.

School staff may be called upon to provide first aid, janitorial, and other auxiliary services that may put them in contact with the blood or other body fluids of AIDS-infected students. Such circumstances present a slight risk of transmission of the AIDS virus through a cut or open sore. To avoid that risk, school employees should always use gloves and other protective procedures—even when dealing with the blood or body fluids of students not known to be infected. And the local Association should insist that the school district provide employees with proper training and equipment.

Can an employer order the mandatory testing of school employees for the AIDS virus? Although the legality of such testing is still an open question, NEA strongly opposes the practice. Since there is no medical reason for removing an infected school employee from the school setting, there is no need for the employer to know whether an employee is infected.

For the most part, school officials around the country have resisted calls for mandatory AIDS testing of employees. One glaring exception is the Georgia state board of education, which last June adopted a policy authorizing school administrators to order an employee to be tested if there is "reasonable cause" to believe he or she is infected. An employee who refuses can be fired.

To date there have been no cases challenging mandatory AIDS testing of school employees. But if it's unlawful to discriminate against employees because of infection with the AIDS virus, then plainly the employer has no legitimate interest in requiring employees to disclose whether they are infected.

In addition, recent court decisions striking down mandatory drug testing of public employees cast some doubt on the legality of mandatory AIDS testing. In one case, for example, a New York appellate court declared unconstitutional a school board policy mandating drug tests for all teachers eligible for tenure.

Because so many of the difficult legal questions raised by the AIDS crisis remain unanswered by the courts, NEA affiliates should work for the adoption of state laws and local policies that clearly spell out procedures for dealing with AIDS-infected students and providing job protection for AIDS-infected employees.

On Capitol Hill, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) have introduced NEA-backed legislation outlawing AIDS-related discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and government services—and guaranteeing confidential testing and counseling. The Reagan Administration has announced its opposition to the bill.

—Mike Simpson,
NEA Office of General Counsel

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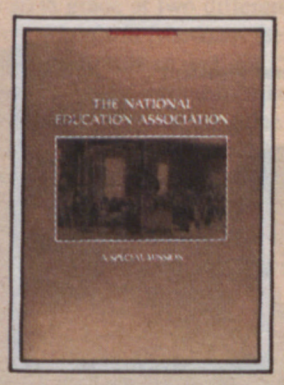

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THE GENERATION ZAP

The bulging "baby boom" generation, now age 23 to 41, is 70 million strong. As its children fill up the nation's classrooms again, this generation's values are influencing the shape of the public schools. What kind of parents do baby boomers make?

In 1986, with the fanfare that's accompanied its every move, America's baby boom generation began to turn 40. The youngest boomers—born in 1964, the last year U.S. births topped 4 million—will turn 40 in 2004.

Along their way, the boomers have swarmed into an overnight growth of suburban developments, swelled elementary schools to bursting, rebelled spectacularly—in civil rights and antiwar movements—against their parents' generation and the established order, and devoted unprecedented attention to their personal physical fitness.

Most of them have now married and had a child or two of their own. The aging vanguard of the 70 million surviving boomers have begun to support an industry in wrinkle creams that's arrived—like everything else connected with the baby boom—seemingly out of nowhere, in astounding magnitude.

Almost a generation separates the last boomers from the first. Some, for example, are beginning teachers, while others are veterans of nearly 20 years in the classroom. And they've faced very different conditions as they've passed through childhood and early adulthood.

The Americans who turned 40 in 1986 found nothing—from housing developments to elementary schools to the job market—ready for them. Those who started school in 1970 were the last to fill up the spacious facilities created for their predecessors. In their wake, school buildings were sold off or rented out, while tricycle manufacturers saw their market shift to stationary bikes. Boomers, who pushed Americans' median age down to 27.9 years in 1967, now have raised it to 31.8.

Although the first boomers married later, started families later, and had fewer children per family than their parents' generation, they're so numerous that just by having one or two children per family they started an echo of the boom. The increase in births that began in 1977 has put some formerly abandoned primary school classrooms back on double shifts.

Boomers—taken as those with between one and 20 years' experience—make up a solid two-thirds of public school teachers, and they're an even greater proportion of the parents of today's K-12 students. As teachers and parents, they're shaping today's schools. And tomorrow's.

How do boomers differ as parents from the generation that came before? They're older (today's teenage moms aren't boomers—they were born into the smaller generations after 1964). They're twice as likely to have gone to college. So they make high demands for their children's education.

That means taking part in more local political and budget issues. Last May, for example, 75,000 California parents attended 4,000 "schoolhouse parties" to lobby for more school funds. It also means wanting a share in decisions about what goes on in school—and trying to help their children do well.

But the interest in education doesn't translate into more helping out at school. Boomer parents have little time or energy for that. In 1986, more than 60 percent of youngsters aged 6 to 17 had mothers in the job market. Some mothers go to work because housework doesn't offer the kind of intellectual stimulation they want. But many more take paid jobs because their families need the money. Despite the notoriety of the yuppies, only 4.5 million Americans between the ages of 25 and 40 make more than $35,000 a year, while 30 million make less than $15,000.

Because the divorce rate soared in the past 15 years, many hard-pressed parents are raising children alone. Last year more than a fourth of U.S. families and more than a third of U.S. children—that's 8.8 million families with 23 million children—were headed by a single person, usually a woman.

Something else is different about boomers as parents. All of them were born after the U.S. dropped the first atomic bombs, on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Many of them remember crazy civil defense drills when they were told to hide under their desks to escape nuclear attack. Many of them recognize what nuclear weapons can do—and are concerned about helping their children deal with the anxieties of knowing that the human race could suddenly and arbitrarily bring the world to an end. No previous generation could provide a mar-

1946
1946 First baby boomers born
1948 Truman elected President
1950 First McCarthy charges; Korean War begins
1951 First nationwide telecast
1952 First H-bomb; Eisenhower elected President
1953 Korean War ends
1954 *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*; "Rock Around the Clock"
1955 Salk polio vaccine; Mickey Mouse Club
1956 Elvis Presley; Eisenhower re-elected
1957 Sputnik; Edsel
1959 Alaska and Hawaii become states
1960 Sit-ins; Kennedy elected President
1961 Bay of Pigs invasion; First human space flight
1962 Cuban missile crisis; Death of Marilyn Monroe
1963 King's "I Have a Dream" speech; President Kennedy assassinated
1964 Beatles tour U.S.; Civil Rights Act passed; Free speech movement at Berkeley; Johnson elected President; Last boomers born
1967 Black awareness move; Urban rebellions in Ne; First Superbowl; Miniskirts; "Hair" opens on Broad

Minnesota teachers (and boomers) Tim and Candy Bell enjoy a ball game with daughters Meghan, 7, and Holly, 14.

Larry Salzman

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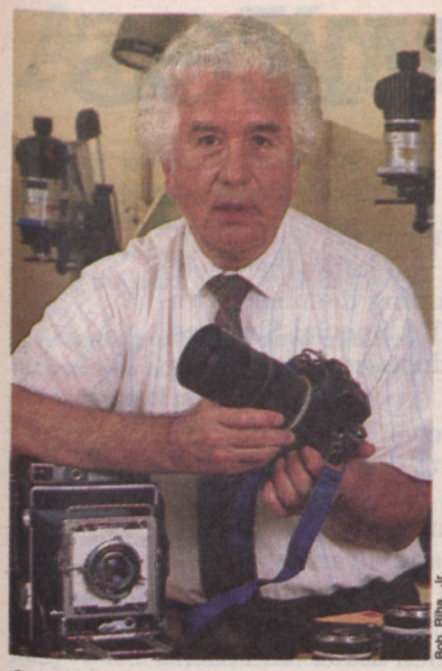

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1966
Stokely Carmichael enunciates Black Power
National Organization for Women forms
Selma-to-Montgomery march
U.S. troop buildup begins in Vietnam

1968 Martin Luther King, Jr., assassinated
Bobby Kennedy assassinated
Police riot at Democratic convention in Chicago
Nixon elected President

1969
First man on the moon
Woodstock
Draft lottery begins
500,000 demonstrators protest Vietnam War

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k, Detroit

1970 Students killed at Kent State and Jackson State

1971 Antiwar mobilization in Washington
Voting age lowered to 18

1972 Nixon re-elected
End of military draft
Congress passes ERAA

1973 Sit-in at Wounded Knee
Watergate
U.S. establishes relations with China

1974
Energy crisis; first gas lines
Nixon resigns, Ford becomes President
Patty Hearst kidnapped

1975
Fall of Saigon

1976
Carter elected President

1977
Number of births turns upward

1978
Camp David Accords

1979
Three Mile Island
Iranian hostage crisis

1980
Reagan elected President
John Lennon murdered

1983
Michael Jackson's *Thriller* album released

1984
Reagan reelected
Anti-apartheid movement

1985
School enrollments start to rise

1986 First boomers turn 40
Last boomers turn 22

ket for books with titles like *Watermelons Not War! A Support Book for Parenting in the Nuclear Age*.

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Bell notes that after-school activities have multiplied rapidly in recent years. "In that sense, the makeup of the family has really caused education to change. When I was growing up, the bell rang, you went home, and mom was there."

Candy Bell points out that parents are becoming more conscious of parenting skills. "Our mothers got to understand us very well just from seeing us every day after school. And just 16 years ago, when I started teaching, setting up a parent conference was no problem. Now about 95 percent of my students' parents work. I think the lifestyle changed before many of us had a chance to think about new ways to carry on our responsibilities to our children.

"In the last three or four years," she continues, "a lot of parents have started to think about how to keep up communication and discipline in their families, to help their children cope with the kinds of choices they're faced with."

Tim Bell says four out of five of his students today either have two working parents or are living with just one parent. Out of 29 kids in his class last year, 15 had stepparents or single parents.

"I don't remember any of my classmates' parents being divorced," Bell says. Noting that Mankato, a college town, shares big-city problems like drugs and teenage pregnancies, he adds, "I don't remember kids having the same problems they have to cope with now at age 10 to 15.

"The parents I see now are able to do more *for* their children, but I don't know if they're able to do more *with* their children. When we have a music program, for example, the parents come and watch their child, then go back to work—they don't have time to wait and take their child home."

"Today kids watch the soap operas—they're much more worldly than I ever thought of being—although they're also more aware of what goes on in the world in a positive way. They see a lot of violence, in horror movies, even in cartoons. That comes out in their writing—they want to talk about someone beating up someone."

Association member Amanda Brown, at 23, is a member of the baby boom's last cohort. When she began teaching fifth grade last year at Hope Elementary School in Scituate, R.I., "the first thing I noticed was the smaller classes," she recalls.

"Of course as a teacher I have a different perspective," says Brown, who last year won an award for outstanding first-year teachers, "but I find I'm able to meet more of my students' individual needs—and to get to know them better as people—than teachers could when I was a student."

Brown notes that as the baby boomlet that began in the late 1970s arrives in the elementary schools, once again class sizes are beginning to grow.

Brown, like the Bells, finds students today much more worldly-wise and better informed than when she was in school, and also less likely to live with both parents.

"I see a lot of children with big responsibilities outside of school—they get their siblings up and out in the morning, they go home and make dinner in the evenings," Brown observes. "I didn't have any schoolmates who had to do that.

"Parents now want their children well

Steve Szydlowski

Second-year teacher Amanda Brown: today, fifth graders seem older.

educated," Brown says, "but that's no different than when I was in school. My parents and I thought teachers were absolutely golden."

Parents today "will fight vociferously for quality education," Brown adds, "but I'm not sure they themselves have the time to promote that in their own homes. For example, they'll come in and ask me to suggest activities they can carry out with their kids, but they don't seem to have time to follow through. And a few parents say education isn't their responsibility, it's the school's. That's very different from when I was in school—the families we knew would do whatever was necessary."

Chuck Perez has taught at Ingleside (Calif.) High School since 1955. "I've started to see a swing back to the late 50s," he says. "The drive to succeed was stronger in those days. A lot of kids have been just drifting with the crowd, but now they're starting to put out a lot more effort.

"There's a swing back among the parents, too," Perez believes. "We used to have a lot more relationships with parents—they were more aware of what their children were doing in school—and outside of school. Then there were some years when there wasn't too much interest. Now parents are very willing to be contacted. They're eager to know what's going on."

Perez says Ingleside High, in the Los Angeles area, reached a peak enrollment of about 2,300 in the early 1960s. Classrooms were crowded, and the district had to bring in some temporary buildings. The school had about 1,500 to 1,700 students throughout the period when the baby boomers were in school. Now it has about 1,300.

Since Perez started teaching, he notes, the student body has gone from almost all white to perhaps 90 percent Black to 60 percent Black and about 30 percent Hispanic. Parents are no longer almost all affluent, although a large group are upper-income Black professionals.

In the height of the baby boom, Perez and other older teachers recall, "students often came into school with a family reputation—we remembered their big brother or sister. Now, with smaller families and more divorces and remarriages shuffling children from place to place, more students tend to be the first from their family to go to this school."

Just as American childhood still bears the changes stamped on it by the millions of boomers in their passage, so American parenthood will likely never be quite the same as before the baby boom generation changed the country, and families along with it. Fewer children, new family structures, high expectations, tight schedules—they may not all be permanent, but today they're the forces shaping...the parents of tomorrow.

—Jane Power

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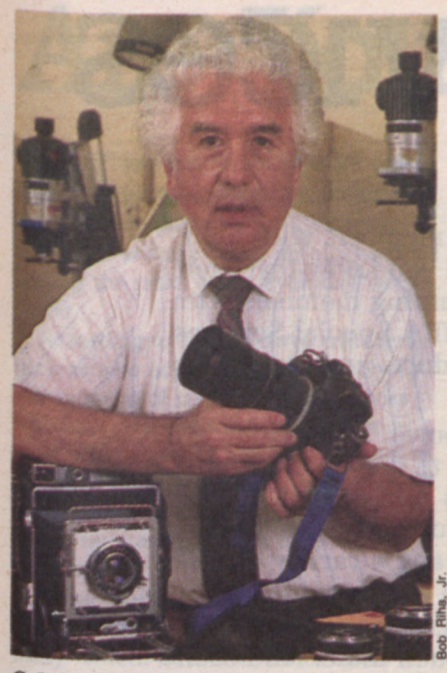

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"In the last three or four years," she continues, "a lot of parents have started to think about how to keep up communication and discipline in their families, to help their children cope with the kinds of choices they're faced with."

Tim Bell says four out of five of his students today either have two working parents or are living with just one parent. Out of 29 kids in his class last year, 15 had stepparents or single parents.

"I don't remember any of my classmates' parents being divorced," Bell says. Noting that Mankato, a college town, shares big-city problems like drugs and teenage pregnancies, he adds, "I don't remember kids having the same problems they have to cope with now at age 10 to 15.

"The parents I see now are able to do more *for* their children, but I don't know if they're able to do more *with* their children. When we have a music program, for example, the parents come and watch their child, then go back to work—they don't have time to wait and take their child home."

"Today kids watch the soap operas—they're much more worldly than I ever thought of being—although they're also more aware of what goes on in the world in a positive way. They see a lot of violence, in horror movies, even in car-

toons. That they want t up someone

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NEA Special Services

Helping you plan your future every day.

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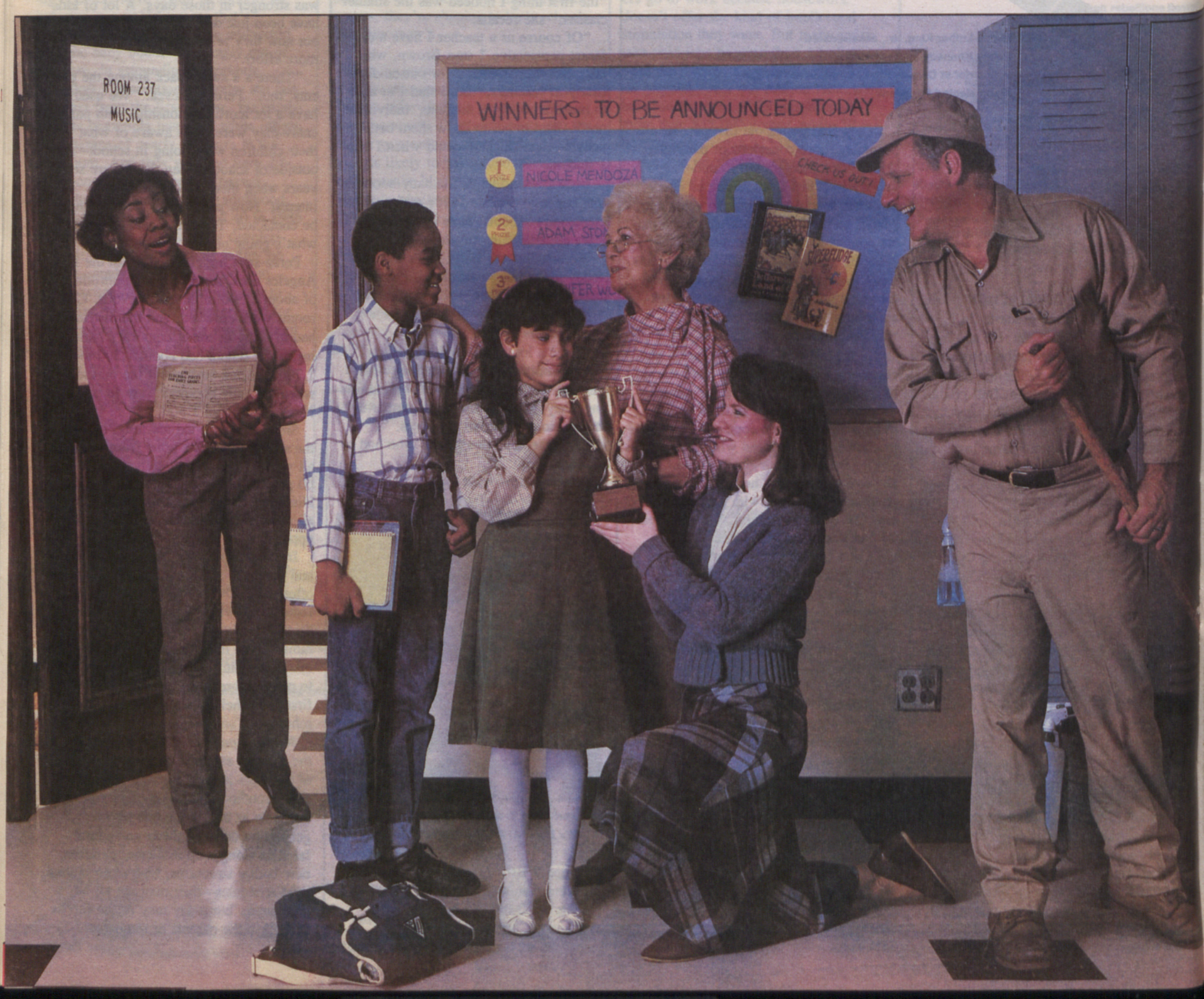
The National Education Association helps members with their professional careers in many ways. But did you know that there's a part of the NEA devoted exclusively to helping members with their personal financial planning needs? NEA Special Services provides a complete range of financial products and services designed especially for NEA members.

Thanks to you, we have the bargaining power to provide members with special values not available to the general public. We offer money management programs (like our NEA gold MasterCard) for your family's financial security; insurance products to protect your life, health and home; and a variety of discounts to save you money all year long. We also provide exciting travel opportunities, product research, consumer education (with our free series of consumer guides) and much more. And each of our programs is backed by the Special Services symbol—your guarantee of quality, service, reliability and value. So look for the Special Services symbol—and let us help you plan your future every day.

If you would like to receive more information on any specific Special Services offerings, please call toll-free 1-800-637-4636. Or write: NEA Special Services Response Center, 51 Monroe Street, Suite 200, Rockville, MD 20850-9965.



YOU AND YOUR RETIREMENT

Are You Ready To Retire?

Many people spend more time planning vacations than they do planning for their retirement. But at some point, all of us will be leaving the ranks of the everyday work world.

According to NEA-Retired members, persons who adjust well and quickly to that moment of truth are usually those who have *planned* for their post-retirement years. A mind and body attuned to the busy life of a teacher or other school employee can't abruptly shift into a happy retirement without careful preparation.

In our work-oriented society, we're often defined in terms of our jobs, and many retirees do feel a loss of status at retirement. But the retirement years can be a time of new growth, creativity, and openness to new ideas, a time for trying new activities and new ways of life, for sharing the knowledge and wisdom accumulated over the years. Retirement can be a time for thriving, not just surviving.

Assuming that you're financially equipped to retire and you're physically healthy, it's a good idea to examine your feelings about how leaving work might affect your emotional health. For starters, take the retirement readiness quiz below, answering each question truthfully (no fudging!). The quiz is adapted from "Health Maintenance and Wellness," one of a series of booklets in the *Planning for the Best Years of Your Life* series, available free to NEA-Retired life members. Other booklets in the series include "Financial Planning," "The Law and Personal Planning," "Home and Safety," "Social Security and Medicare," and "Health and Leisure."

What Your Answers Mean

Your answers to the open-ended question, number 1, can be most revealing. Generally, if you would miss elements rooted in the work itself, you should try to duplicate these elements in your retirement activity.

For the other seven questions, "a" responses suggest an attitude of readiness for retirement, while "b" responses suggest reluctance. The more "a" answers you gave, the more positive your outlook toward retirement is.

Here are some tips from NEA-Retired for developing a positive attitude about retirement.

► Think of retirement as just one link in a lifelong chain.

► Prepare as well as you can.

► In certain areas—like a daily activity schedule—be prepared to experiment. Remove one element and substitute another until results are satisfactory. Be flexible.

► Be ready for and open to new experiences and new relationships. Work on developing new attitudes that represent a deepening of your maturity and wisdom.

—Marian Clayton

Retirement Readiness Quiz

1. *If I were retiring today, what would I miss most about my job?*

   _____
   _____
   _____

   What would I miss least?

   _____
   _____
   _____

2. *I'm financially secure. My boss comes to me and says, "I know you're ready to leave for retirement, but we need you. Why not stay on the job for a couple more years?" I would say,*
   - ☐ (a) No, thanks.
   - ☐ (b) Yes, I'll stay.

3. *When I say the word "retirement,"*
   - ☐ (a) my mind is filled with thoughts of the exciting things I'll finally have time to do.
   - ☐ (b) my heart sinks.

4. *Whenever I discuss my retirement with my spouse, friends, or other family members,*
   - ☐ (a) I speak enthusiastically.
   - ☐ (b) I speak gloomily.

5. *In thinking about my retirement,*
   - ☐ (a) I make good plans and decisions.
   - ☐ (b) My mind is a blank.

6. *I think of retirement*
   - ☐ (a) as a beginning.
   - ☐ (b) as an end.

7. *I have one or more major projects or activities—things I was never able to fit in while working—that I plan to embark on after I retire.*
   - ☐ (a) Yes
   - ☐ (b) No

8. *I like to read about retirement, discuss it, and research its many aspects.*
   - ☐ (a) True
   - ☐ (b) False

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Today, health education is elementary. As kids learn multiplication, they're also being primed in good nutrition and proper health habits. But to provide comprehensive health education, schools need help from their communities.

So, to help you promote community support, the "Healthy Me" program has matching grants of up to $5000 each for local groups that actively encourage comprehensive health education in their public school systems. We offer awards for professional preparation and exemplary health education programs, too. Just write us for details: "Healthy Me," Health and Safety Education (16UV), One Madison Avenue, NY, NY 10010-3690. We believe healthy children are basic to a bright future.

Metropolitan Life Foundation

PEANUTS Characters: © 1958, 1966, 1968. United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

People

What has 200 green thumbs, an orchard, an arboretum, a vineyard, and a nursery with $25,000 in annual revenues?

Ross Pfann's horticulture program in Bellevue, Wash., of course.

Since becoming Interlake High School's horticulture teacher eight years ago, Pfann has created a unique science/vocational program that provides 100 students a year with theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Kids from other schools also enroll in the program, which has a long waiting list.

Students spend half their time in the classroom studying plants, the other half in the greenhouse growing them. They also operate the program's retail nursery. Advanced students are responsible for a landscaping project on the school grounds.

"The program gives students a sense of pride," explains Pfann. "They're responsible for their own crops, from seed to finished product.

"The nursery gives them experience dealing with the public," he adds. "Nursery revenues pay for the program's full-time aide, as well as for students working in the nursery on weekends and holidays."

An educator for 28 years, Pfann returned to school for his vocational certification after taking over the program. And he's constantly taking courses and attending professional meetings to keep abreast of the latest horticultural developments. □

Their own school is large and modern, but the 250 K-3 students at Lincolnview Elementary in Middle Point, Ohio, know all about the one-room schools their forebears attended.

That's because last year Association member **Eileen Lucier's** third graders celebrated the 200th anniversary of public education in the former Northwest Territory by creating a colorful quilt depicting dozens of Van Wert County's old one-room schoolhouses.

Now hanging in the school, the quilt contains 48 squares, each with a student's crayon drawing of a one-room school. The class drew from old photos of the schools themselves, from photos of current buildings that used to be one-room schools, and from information provided by former teachers or students from the one-room schools.

To complete the project, Lucier ironed the drawings onto fabric squares, sewed them together, and backed them with a mattress pad.

"The quilt is a fantastic historical record," Lucier notes, "but we couldn't have made it without help from our township trustees, who gave us copies of an 1886 map showing the old schools' locations." □

Dennis Laman

The usual array of jello molds and mixing spoons can be found in **Arline Johnson's** Westbrook (Conn.) Junior-Senior High School home economics classroom—but the pamphlets on the shelf indicate there's more going on here than cooking lessons.

One five-panel flyer headlined "Thin Is In... Or Is It?" was written by Johnson herself. A 20-year teaching veteran, Association member Johnson parlayed her knowledge about eating disorders to win the 1987 Connecticut Home Economics Teacher of the Year award.

Her flyer grew out of a master's thesis Johnson wrote in 1985, for which she surveyed Westbrook High students and found nearly 4 percent suffering from either anorexia nervosa (pathological aversion to food and obsession with weight) or bulimia (binge eating followed by self-induced vomiting).

Johnson's pamphlet has been distributed to every home economics teacher and hospital in the state. □

Jeff Zehr

When Spartanburg, S.C., Chapter 1 reading teacher **Eva Roussos** volunteered to teach a curriculum designed to prevent teenage pregnancy, she knew she had strong backing.

Alarmed at the high local rate of 52 pregnancies per 1,000 girls, parents and school board members had requested such a unit for the seventh and eighth graders in Spartanburg's District 2. Only students with their parents' permission could take the 16-lesson unit.

But about a month after Roussos' unit started in the spring of 1986, so did the trouble. A small, vocal group of parents objected.

"They accused me of using a certain textbook—and I wasn't using any textbook at all," reports Roussos in amazement. "They said I was using other materials that I wasn't using."

Roussos fought back—hard. She had a parents' day when she showed all the films and displayed all the materials she was using in the class. She gave interviews to the local media. She started a night class where parents could come and get exactly the same course their children were getting.

Before any new group of students started taking the unit, Roussos met with their parents to let them know exactly what she'd be doing. The school board supported her all the way, and in the end, the unit continued. This fall 90 percent of the eligible students are enrolled.

Roussos' work was publicly recognized last spring when she received the South Carolina Association of School Librarians' Intellectual Freedom Award. □

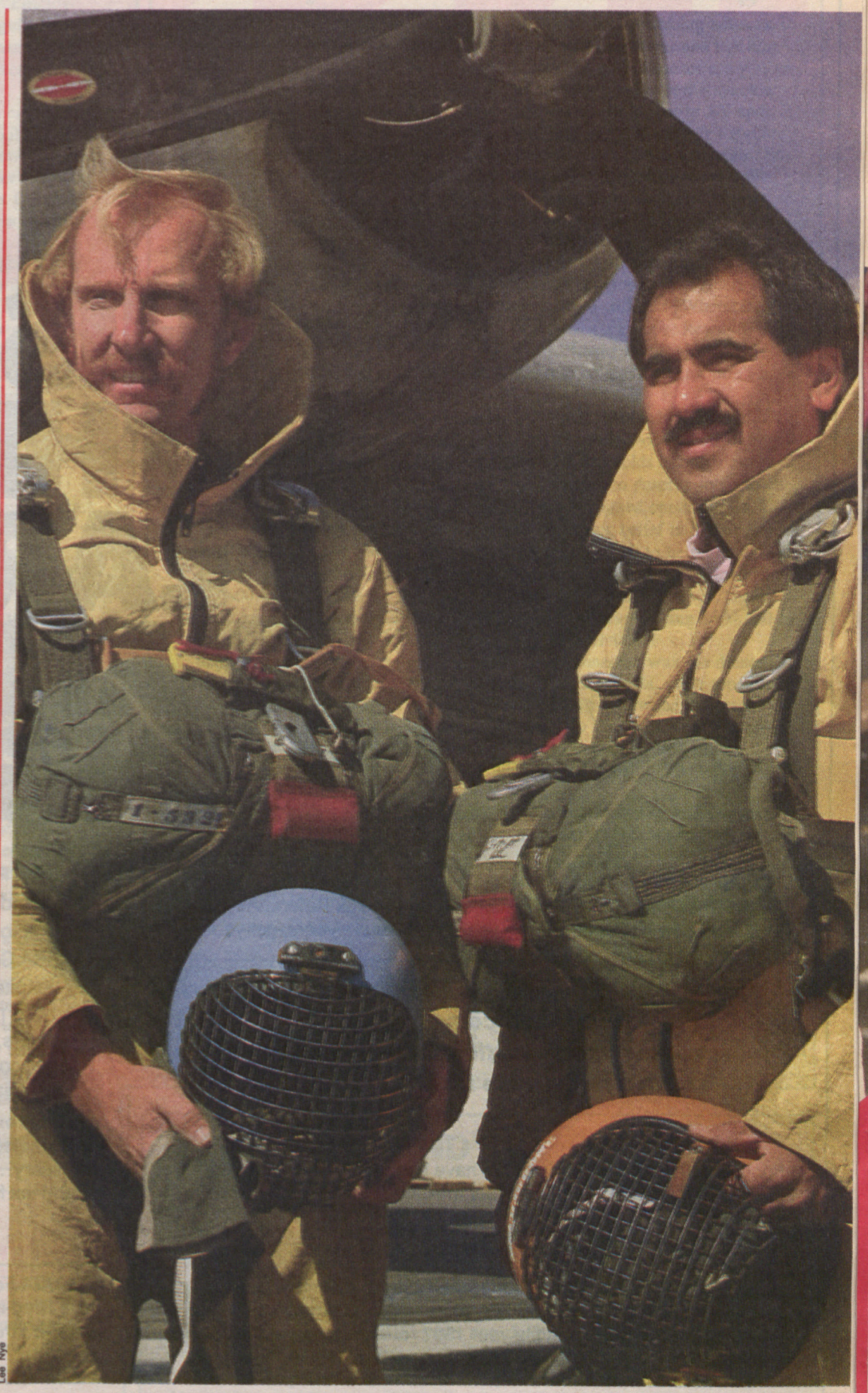
"Practice what you teach" could be **Eddy Seger**'s adage.

By day Seger is an art and drama teacher at Caesar Rodney High School in Camden, Del. On nights and weekends he's a sculptor, portrait painter, set designer, actor, and calligrapher—who also sings at weddings.

His plaster replica of the Statue of Liberty—designed to help raise funds for restoring the real one—presided over the 1986 and 1987 Independence Day festivities in Dover, Del. Seger also worked with the Delaware State Education Association to design a bookmark celebrating the bicentennial of the Constitution, distributed to students throughout the state.

Seger feels he has two careers. "I teach art to help others learn to express themselves," he explains. "And being an artist lends credence to what I say as a teacher." □

Ralph Freso



Lee Nye

It's not work for those who are faint-hearted or leery of hard physical labor. But **Willis Curdy** and **Roberto Nevarez** are neither.

The two Montana Education Association members spend their summers as smokejumpers for the U.S. Forest Service, parachuting into forest fires not reachable any other way.

"It's a special kind of work," says Nevarez. "You see the ugliness of fire—and the incredible beauty of these remote areas. Preserving that beauty is up to us."

Nevarez, a sixth grade teacher in Lolo, Mont., has been smokejumping for 11 years. Curdy, who teaches social studies in Missoula, has been at it for 17.

"I do like jumping out of airplanes," laughs Curdy. "It's also a thrill to go where few people have ever been. And there's a special camaraderie when you're out there with your buddy, or a larger crew, doing hard physical work in dangerous conditions." Smokejumpers always work in pairs.

After the smokejumpers parachute into a fire area, their equipment is dropped in after them. They then must assess the fire, dig a fireline and take other measures to halt its spread, and "mop up"—a painstaking process to ensure the fire is out.

Heading back to the smokejumper base in Missoula also can be arduous—sometimes requiring packing 115 pounds out to a place accessible to helicopters or mules.

Why keep at it, year after year? "I need the chance to get outdoors, to work with nature and a good partner," says Nevarez. "And I just enjoy doing hard physical work that helps people and is important to me." □

INCOME TAX

THIS IS THE YEAR IT ALL CHANGES

Do You Have Questions? We Have Answers!

For the answers to all your questions about the Tax Reform Act of 1986, and how it affects you this year *and in future years*, get your copy of:

The National Education Association
Federal Income Tax Guide
for Education Employees
(1988 Guide for 1987 Taxes)

Starting from Scratch

For years, thousands of educators have been using the *NEA Federal Income Tax Guide* to help them pay the lowest tax allowed by law. This year, with the whole system changed, you need the kind of expert, sensible, easily accessible information John C. Arch gives in this perennial favorite. You'll get information as general as The New Rates (both '87s and '88s)...to the intricacies of deductible/non-ductible travel expenses. Here are some of the changes you will need to be aware of as you file your 1987 return:

- New Rates
- Standard Deduction
- Personal Exemptions
- IRA Contributions
- Capital Gains
- Personal Deductions (interest, sales tax, medical expenses, moving expenses, etc.)
- Employee Business Expenses
- And These Other Items: scholarships and fellowships, tuition waivers, home office expenses, dividend exclusion, unemployment compensation, deduction for two wage earners, income averaging...

You'll get explanations and suggestions *you can understand* as well as examples illustrating the applications...several different ways, if necessary...to ensure you the best guide for wading through your federal tax forms.

Speaking of Forms...

The NEA Federal Income Tax Guide for Education Employees will have filled-in samples of the new forms for you as an added help to ease you through the process.

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Copies will be ready for mailing on December 28th.

Allow 3-4 weeks for regular delivery

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Your NEA

REACHING OUT

Celebrate!

November 15-21 is American Education Week, a time for strengthening school-community relations and renewing the commitment to excellence. The theme this year is "We the People... Building Schools Together."

The Week, celebrated each November since 1921, is cosponsored by NEA, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the National School Boards Association, the U.S. Department of Education, and the American Legion.

A new feature this year is a special salute to school support staff, set for Wednesday, November 18.

Maehling Grants Now Up to $4,000

Attention, educators: the 1987-88 Hilda Maehling Fellowship grants offer a maximum of $4,000—up from $2,500—for unique and innovative projects.

The criteria are simple. Proposed projects must advance professional Association work, improve professional development, or fashion professional tools and techniques. Individual NEA members, groups of NEA members, local affiliates, and committees of local affiliates are all eligible to apply. Deadline is December 1.

For more information about the Hilda Maehling Fellowship grants, write to the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Competition Seeks Student Entries

High school students are eligible to win cash awards in two annual competitions sponsored by the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped.

Juniors and seniors can win up to $3,000 in the 1988 National Journalism Contest by writing about "Employment: The Passport to Dignity." Entries should reflect research, personal observations, and interviews with disabled persons.

Students in grades 9-12 can win up to $1,000 in the high school category of the 1988 National Poster/Graphics contest by designing a poster showing how disabled persons meet the challenges of everyday living as workers and employers.

Entries will first be judged at the state level; state winners will then go on to compete nationally. Entry deadlines vary from state to state, but all are earlier than the national deadlines, which are March 1 for journalism entries and Feb. 15 for posters.

For the name of the sponsoring organization in your state, contact your Governor's Committee on the Handicapped. For details write to either National Journalism Contest or Poster Contest, President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, Washington, DC 20036 (202/653-5044).

High-Flying Science

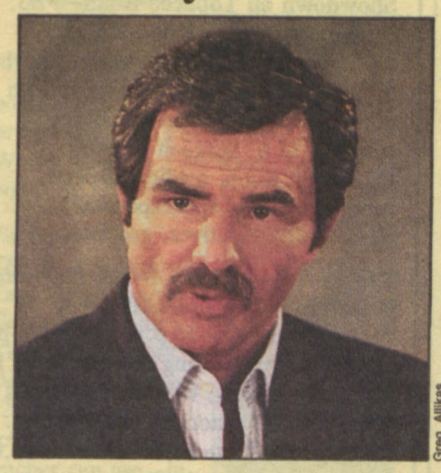
Help promote awareness of science and technology—have your students take part in the fourth annual balloon launch during National Science and Technology Week, April 24-30.

The nationwide April 25 launch is coordinated by the Triangle Coalition for Science and Technology Education, representing industries, scientific and engineering societies, and education associations. NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell is the education chair of the Coalition.

Each balloon will carry a postpaid card addressed to the American Geological Institute. The Institute will send a sample of the responses to the U.S. Geological Survey, which will plot the balloon landings on a U.S. map. Studying the results is a great way for students to learn about wind patterns and high and low pressure cells.

Balloons and accompanying materials must be ordered from the Triangle Coalition by December 21. The cost for 250 balloons and related materials is $60. For further information, contact Triangle Coalition for Science and Technology Education, c/o NSTA Special Projects, 5112 Berwyn Rd., College Park, MD 20740 (301/220-0876).

Burt Reynolds Delivers NEA Message



Greg Allikas

If you've been watching network news, public affairs, and morning shows recently, chances are you've seen Hollywood's Burt Reynolds starring in NEA's latest TV spot, designed to build support for more federal aid to higher education. Student aid programs have been disappearing ever since the Reagan Administration took office.

The 30-second spot features the popular actor musing that "there's something wrong when smart kids can't go to college." When teaching at drama workshops, Reynolds adds, "I hear about a lot of kids who have the grades and desperately want to go to college, but just don't have the money. That's wrong."

Reynolds notes that if it hadn't been for a football scholarship, he couldn't have attended Florida State University. (He left for Hollywood when an injury ended his football career.) The spot concludes with Reynolds asking viewers to join with NEA in its fight "to make sure that people who deserve to go to college can." He urges, "Let's not make this a land of missed opportunities."

Reynolds' affection for his alma mater and his strong belief in higher education led him to endow Florida State with $600,000 in 1980 to help establish a permanent chair in the School of Theater. The state matched this endowment with $400,000 to create the Burt Reynolds Eminent Scholar Chair in Theater—the first such chair created under a 1979 Florida law guaranteeing $400,000 in state money to match any $600,000 grant from an individual.

Reynolds also sponsors an apprentice program connected with his dinner theater in Jupiter, Fla. Here, for the past 10 years, Reynolds, other top actors, and drama teachers have worked with up-and-coming actors and actresses.

Last spring Reynolds received one of the first two Second Century Awards, presented annually by Eastman Kodak to honor persons who help ensure the future of the motion picture industry by nurturing new talent. The other award went to Steven Spielberg.

Reynolds has a reputation for refusing to do commercials or endorsements. But he feels so strongly about the need for increased college student aid that he volunteered to film the NEA spot.

The spot will continue to air as a public service message over the coming year on ABC, Cable Network News, and the Independent News Network. □

LOOKING BACK

"I don't think my parents should make me wear a sweater when they are cold."

"Please offer your bed ***not mine*** *when company comes."*

These are among the down-to-earth rules for parents that schoolchildren across the country wrote in response to two notices in *NEA Today* (June and December 1985). They appear in *Children's Rules for Parents*, a 102-page paperback published by Harper & Row ($ 4.95).

An acknowledgments section lists by name, school, and city the more than 100 teachers whose students contributed. "Their sensitive discussions triggered tremendous outpourings of creative and thoughtful writing," say editors Michael Laser and Ken Goldner.

If your bookstore doesn't have *Children's Rules for Parents*, you can order a copy by calling Harper & Row at 800/638-3030 (in Pennsylvania, 800/982-4377).

TAKING A STAND

NEA Board Ends Coors Boycott

The NEA Board of Directors decided by voice vote at its Sept. 18-19 meeting to end NEA's three-year boycott of Coors Beer. The AFL-CIO recently lifted the national boycott it began 10 years ago, following agreement by the Colorado-based Adolph Coors Company to allow labor organizing at Coors facilities.

NEA had joined the boycott in 1984, by vote of the Representative Assembly and Board of Directors. NEA played a key role in the negotiations that led to the settlement of the Coors labor dispute. The *Rocky Mountain News* reported that the first negotiating session "would not have taken place if it had not been for the National Education Association."

Under a policy set by the NEA Board of Directors in 1975, NEA must publish every roll-call vote of the Board. There were two such votes at the Sept. 18-19 Board meeting; both were unanimous.

#1: Approved a plan and budget to implement a dropout education training program as directed by the Representative Assembly (new business item 87-3) and authorized an allocation of $75,000 from the contingency fund to cover implementation costs.

137 yes, 1 nonrespondent, 1 absent but replaced by alternate.

#2: Allocated $499,150 from the contingency fund for the purpose of implementing the first year of a three-year plan to implement the recommendations of the four ethnic minority study committee reports.

135 yes, 3 nonrespondents, 1 absent but replaced by alternate.

Absentee was William T. Cleveland of New York, replaced by alternate Lowena Bristol. □

RESOURCES

TV/Radio Tips

The Infinite Voyage—*PBS, premiering Wednesday, Oct. 28, 8-9 p.m. ET; Superstations WOR-TV New York and WGN-TV Chicago, premiering Monday, Nov. 2; check local listings for future dates and times.* Landmark 12-episode series, produced in cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences, about a three-year odyssey probing scientific action, exploration, and discovery. Curriculum guides have been mailed to 18,000 secondary science educators and are available from local PBS stations.

The First Eden—*PBS, Mondays, Nov. 2-23; check local listings for times.* Sir David Attenborough hosts a four-part series exploring the oldest continuously populated region on earth—the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.

Geo—*Discovery Channel, Tuesdays beginning Nov. 3, midnight-1 a.m. ET, rebroadcast Wednesdays, 5-6 p.m. ET and Thursdays, 9-10 p.m. ET.* New travelogue series featuring some of the world's most fascinating wonders.

Kids Like These—*CBS-TV, Sunday, Nov. 8, 9-11 p.m. ET.* Tyne Daly, Richard Crenna, and Martin Balsam star in a drama about the challenges a mother must face when her newborn child is diagnosed as having Down's Syndrome.

North American Indian Portrait—*Discovery Channel, Mondays beginning Nov. 9, 11:30 a.m.-noon ET, rebroadcast Tuesdays, 9:30-10 p.m. ET and Thursdays, 12:30-1 a.m. ET.* New series examines the American Indian from historical, religious, and political perspectives.

Napolean and Josephine: A Love Story—*ABC-TV, Tuesday, Nov. 10, 9-11 p.m. ET, Wednesday, Nov. 11, 9-11 p.m. ET, and Thursday, Nov. 12, 9-11 p.m. ET.* Six-hour miniseries dramatizes the tumultuous romance between Napoleon Bonaparte and Josephine Beauharnais.

Sherlock Holmes—*Arts & Entertainment Network, Tuesday, Nov. 10, 9 p.m.-midnight ET.* Frank Langella stars in this special stage adaptation by 19th century actor William Gillette.

Showdown on Tobacco Road—*PBS, Wednesday, Nov. 11, 8-9 p.m. ET.* Documentary presents both sides of the tobacco issue through interviews with politicians, pro- and anti-smoking activists, U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, medical experts, tobacco industry spokespersons, advertising executives, and attorneys.

The Divided Union—*Arts & Entertainment Network, Wednesdays, Nov. 11 through Dec. 9, 9-10 p.m. ET.* Five-part documentary featuring recreations of key Civil War battles, with commentaries by more than 50 historians and scholars. Study guides have been mailed to 16,000 secondary social science departments and are also available from Arts & Entertainment Network, Community Marketing, 555 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10017.

Lena: My Hundred Children—*NBC-TV, Monday, Nov. 23, 9-11 p.m. ET.* Linda Lavin plays the title role in this true story of a woman who risks her life to save 100 Jewish children in Poland during World War II.

In Touch—*CBS Radio, Monday-Friday, 10:20 a.m.* 90-second feature looks at a top story of the day or current issues of interest to young adults.

The Empire Strikes Back—*National Public Radio; check local listings for dates and times.* Radio production based on the George Lucas film has an extended storyline and features original cast members Mark Hammill, Anthony Daniels, and Billie Dee Williams.

Father Clements—*NBC-TV, sometime in November; check local listings for dates and times.* Carroll O'Connor, Louis Gossett, and Malcom-Jamal Warner star in this true story of an unconventional priest who tries to adopt a rebellious boy against the church hierarchy's wishes. □

Sneak Previews

Now in development and scheduled to air on ABC-TV later this season is "The Final Days," a drama about the last days of the Nixon administration. The production is based on the best-selling book of the same name by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein.

ABC-TV has also started production on "War and Remembrance," scheduled to air during 1988-89 as a 30-hour "novel for television." The presentation, based on the book of the same name by Herman Wouk, will complete the story that began with the 1983 telecast of "Winds of War."

NEA Honors Broadcasts

NEA this fall honored 10 broadcasts—nine television and one radio—with its sixth annual Awards for the Advancement of Learning Through Broadcasting. Some 200 programs that aired between May 1, 1986, and April 30, 1987, were nominated.

"Zoobilee Zoo" and "CBS Television Reading Program" won in the category of programs produced for children. Winner among dramatic productions for general audiences: CBS's "The George McKenna Story."

Tops in documentary or educational programs for general audiences: ABC's "Nightline" for its AIDS series; "NBC White Paper: To Be a Teacher"; and HBO's "How to Raise a Street-Smart Child."

The remaining winners were local broadcasts: KTVY-TV's (Oklahoma City) "Through Children's Eyes," WPFW-FM's (Mt. Rainier, Md.) "Changing the Course: U.S. Policy Toward South Africa," WJZ-TV's (Baltimore, Md.) "Class," and WPSX-TV's (Penn State University) "Pennarama."

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RESOURCES

Free or Inexpensive

CONSUMER ECONOMICS

Children and Money Management. Describes age-appropriate ways parents and teachers can teach children from preschool through high school how to deal with money. 28 pp. $1. Discounts of 10 percent on orders over $100. Money Management Institute, Dept. NEA, Household Financial Services, 2700 Sanders Rd., Prospect Heights, IL 60070.

1988 CALENDARS

365 New Words for Kids and ***365 Days of American History for Kids.*** SHOELACE PAGE-A-DAY™ wall calendars

featuring respectively vocabulary words and historical events. (The "New Word" definitions were prepared by Merriam-Webster.) $7.95 each plus $2 postage and handling. From booksellers or by mail from Workman Publishing Co., 1 W. 39th St., New York, NY 10018.

INTERDISCIPLINARY

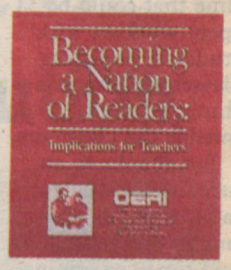
The Second Kids' World Almanac of Records and Facts. Alice Siegel and Margo McLoone-Basta and the Editors of the World Almanac. Presents facts about young people or of interest to young people—such as the questions kids most frequently ask librarians. 288 pp. $6.95 plus $1 postage and handling. From booksellers or by mail from Pharos Books, c/o World Almanac Education, 1278 W. Ninth St., Cleveland, OH 44113.

Take Me Along: The Best Substitute Teacher's Survival Guide Yet! Lynn Videon and others. Describes more than 125 educational activities any K-6 teacher can use—in an emergency or as part of a planned lesson. 108 pp. $6.95 prepaid. Fearon Teacher Aids, David S. Lake Publishers, 19 Davis Dr., Belmont, CA 94002.

Creativity and Learning. Beth A. Hennessey and Teresa M. Amabile. Explains implications of latest research for the role of creativity in learning and shows teachers how to avoid practices that can dull student creativity. 32 pp. Stock no. 1078-7-00-D. $2.95. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516.

READING

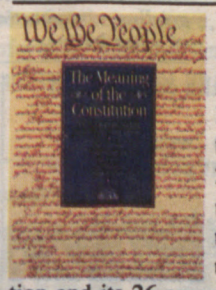
Becoming a Nation of Readers: Implications for Teachers. Marilyn R. Binkley and others for the U.S. Department of Education. Suggestions for instructional practices, based on research presented in *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (1985), to increase the achievement of beginning readers. 23 pp. $1.50, by check or charge to VISA/MC. Stock no. 065-000-00260-4. Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.



MENTAL ILLNESS

You Are Not Alone. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Facts about mental health and mental illness. 10 pp. $1, by check or charge to VISA/MC. Stock no. 017-024-01268-8. Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

SOCIAL STUDIES



The Meaning of the Constitution. Angela Roddy Holder. Revised second edition (to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution) presents the text of the Constitution and its 26 amendments—with discussion of how each provision has been interpreted. 130 pp. $7.95, plus $1.50 postage and handling. Barron's, 250 Wireless Blvd., Hauppauge, NY 11788.

The Greening of Africa: Breaking Through in the Battle for Land and Food. Paul Harrison. A journalist explores Africa's crisis of food and environment and describes some development projects that seem to provide a way out. 380 pp. $6.95. Penguin. From booksellers or prepaid by mail from Viking Penguin, Inc., 40 W. 23rd St., New York, NY 10010.

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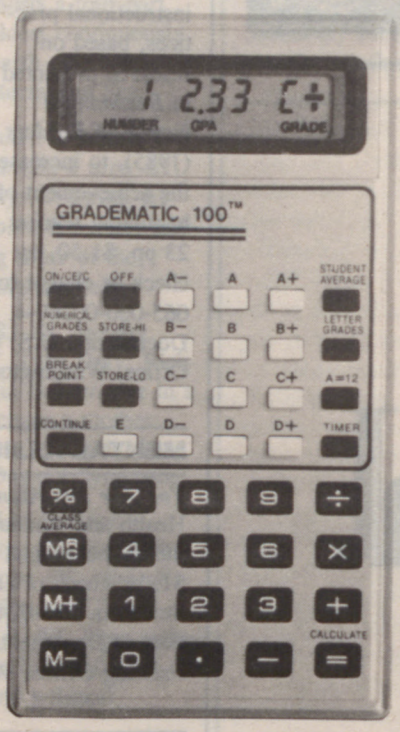
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BOOK BEAT

Hooking Kids on Words...

In *Doing Words*, Maine first grade teacher Katie Johnson describes how to use five- and six-year-olds' experiences to teach them to read and write.

"Doing Words" is what Johnson calls the method she adapted from Sylvia Ashton-Warner's "Key Vocabulary" approach. Primary teachers can use *Doing Words* as a how-to-teach-it book. But any teacher or parent can learn from it how to listen to what children say to find out what emotional shoring up they need that day.

DOING WORDS

by Katie Johnson

(Houghton Mifflin. 257 pp. $15.95.)

In Johnson's first grade, the day begins with each child selecting a "Word"—usually a single word that refers to something important to him or her at that moment. Six-year-olds often choose "Mama," since many are uneasy at being away from home.

The teacher writes the word on a card for the child to trace, read to a friend, and add to his or her envelope of collected words. The word is an "emotional hook," Johnson says. It connects a child's inner concerns to the act of writing.

Johnson outlines six "movements" or phases that kindergartners and first graders proceed through. Movement I is the phase just described, in which a child selects one word each day. In successive Movements, the word becomes a phrase, then a sentence, finally a story.

All this in about an hour a day, by the end of first grade!

Not only does Johnson provide primary teachers with clean, crisp description, she also acts as a troubleshooter—using her experiences to guide teachers over possible pitfalls. In later chapters, she tells how to use the approach with second and third graders who have never experienced Doing Words.

It's refreshing to read such a warm, sensitive, humorous, practical book—one that's devoid of the usual educational jargon.

Reviewed by Marsha Campos (left) and Evie Andrews, first grade teachers at Tualatin (Oregon) Elementary School. Both are members of the Tigard Education Association.

...and Reining Rebels In

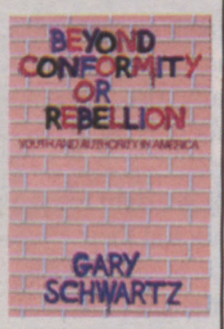
In *Beyond Conformity or Rebellion*, sociologist Gary Schwartz looks at the ways adolescents interact with adult authority in six anonymous Midwestern communities. Though his book is meant to provide insights into differences in community climates, educators can find in it insights into school climates.

Schwartz's method was to send field-workers (mostly graduate students) into the six communities to interview students, school staff, police, and youth workers as well as to observe interaction among these groups. The data were gathered in the 1970s.

BEYOND CONFORMITY OR REBELLION: YOUTH AND AUTHORITY IN AMERICA

by Gary Schwartz

(University of Chicago Press. 293 pp. $24.95.)



Schwartz offers readers some gems of interpretation. Unfortunately, the gems analogy is all too accurate, for the book requires mining rather than reading to obtain its secrets. Nonetheless, here are two examples, taken from Schwartz's descriptions of two working-class communities.

In one strongly Catholic suburb, where parents link adolescent deviance to defects in "moral character," contention between the generations is frequent. Yet young people draw back from serious delinquent behavior because they know that adults from their community can succeed in politics and business—and they don't want to ruin their own chances for success.

In a second blue-collar town, where few adults have reached local eminence, teachers and families view each other with class-conscious suspicion. Parents expect teachers to be tough on kids in general, but never on "my kid"—for in this community adults have no faith that "authority" will be fair with them or with their children.

The differences show up in school. In the second community, school is alien territory; in the first, a partner with the home.

One procedural note: The ethical and moral issues raised when fieldworkers witnessed illegal alcohol and drug activities as part of their research for this book are never addressed. That bothers me both as a sociologist and as a Midwesterner raised in a rural, homogeneous community where parents expect that other adults will not be accepting of behavior parents themselves would condemn.

Reviewed by Association member James D. Kraft, a sociology teacher at Wausau West High School, Wausau, Wisc.

INTERNATIONAL

Rick Musacchio

In the gymnasium of Bradley Model School in Murfreesboro, Tenn., federal court Judge Thomas A. Wiseman, Jr., outlines the meaning of U.S. citizenship to two new citizens and their well-wishers.

Rick Musacchio

Chanthavy Jan Phanthalangsry and Seigh Dick Sombounseth begin new lives as U.S. citizens.

Brand-New Americans Celebrate the Constitution

On September 16 schools and other institutions across the nation celebrated the bicentennial of our Constitution. In a school gymnasium in Murfreesboro, Tenn., a dramatic ceremony symbolized both the past and the future that the Constitution protects.

Standing before a federal district court judge, under the eyes of their own relatives and the entire school family, two Laotian immigrants with close ties to the Bradley Model School took the oath of U.S. citizenship.

Over recent years, advocates of an English-only approach to education have mounted a well-publicized campaign to name a single "official" language—and by implication a single "official" culture—for our country. At Bradley, by contrast, newcomers' languages are respected while they learn English. The school is a shining example of how the cultures of immigrant children can enhance and enrich our own many-sided society.

New citizen Seigh Dick Sombounseth is the father of the first family of immigrants to attend Bradley. Chanthavy Jan Phanthalangsry, who now works for a local TV station, started out in this country as a classroom aide to ESL teacher Susan Gendrich.

In preparation for the citizenship ceremony and the Bicentennial, the whole school spent several weeks studying the Constitution in social studies classes.

Rick Musacchio

Bill Massaquoi, Anna Phothirath, and Laurel Callow celebrate the citizenship and the Constitution they've been learning about in social studies.

Association member Gendrich wrote the curriculum for the ESL program, which draws children—most of them Asian—from throughout the school district. Out of some 450 elementary students at Bradley, 45 or 50 are usually in the ESL class, although they take math, science, art, and physical education with their American schoolmates. As the students become more comfortable doing their classwork in English, they attend more and more classes with the U.S. students. When they test at

Rick Musacchio

Aide Keo Sisombath, ESL teacher Susan Gendrich, and Seny and Chanthavy Phanthalangsry admire flowers given to new citizen Chanthavy (right).

the 50th percentile on the Stanford Achievement Test, usually after three to five years at Bradley, they move on to a school close to home.

"Being bilingual is a gift, not a handicap," says Gendrich, "and we make sure students know that well. Given our respect for their culture, given time for them to become comfortable with our language and culture, these students are making all of us the richer."

—Jane Power

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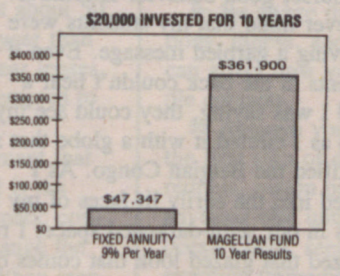

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SOUNDING BOARD

Open Classrooms: It's Time To Close Them

by Kenneth Miller

***Are open classrooms doing what they were designed to do? An Indiana teacher who's taught in several says* no.**

I could see the puzzled expressions on the parents' faces that night of Open House. I was listing the countries we would be studying in seventh grade social studies, so I began to think maybe I was forgetting one—an important one.

Russia, China, South Africa, England, Canada—still no apparent relief for my audience. My mental processes began to split into two directions—one continuing along the path of my presentation, the other searching an inner checklist of what these people in front of me might be waiting to hear.

Then I noticed the sound of my colleagues' similar orations about their classes. Nothing helpful or reassuring about their voices—they only reminded me how noisy my open classroom environment was. Got to tune out those sounds, I thought.

I finished my list of countries to be studied and prepared to move on to homework procedures. "As you've probably noticed," I remarked in passing, "it does get kind of loud in here."

Immediately the puzzled faces began to nod agreement. Creased foreheads relaxed. Some people smiled in understanding.

I liked that obvious reinforcement—so much, in fact, that I set aside my preplanned lecture to discuss the noise around us. I pointed out the logic of an open classroom—that it had been devised about 20 years ago to fit into team teaching and allow for a fluid movement of people and ideas. This type of construction, I noted, not only saves money, it also marks a break with the rigid learning organizations of the past that witnessed the same seating arrangement in May as in September.

I had gone to the topic that was foremost in the parents' minds, but my explanation of the virtues of the open classroom served more to acknowledge the problem than to explain how to deal with it. Parents left that night shaking their heads and telling each other how glad they were that I understood the noise generated by open classrooms and was able to cope with it. They must have assumed that somewhere in my education courses I had received some type of decibel tune-out training.

Next day in class, I thought back to the bewildered parents of the previous evening. They'd been making a real effort to give me their full attention—but I doubted that their children were doing the same.

From two spaces away—I no longer felt I occupied a room—my students and I could hear a videotape discussing the symptoms associated with gonorrhea. In the space immediately beside mine, a substitute was steadfastly refusing to believe that three students in her class were named Michael Jordan.

As the noise of open classrooms poured through the gap between my eight-foot walls and 16-foot ceiling, I decided the only way to fight fire was with fire. I began to kindle the flames of a lesson dedicated to increasing my students' knowledge about the fall and spring equinoxes...or was it the winter and summer solstices? What did it really matter? At this point in my lesson knowledge was not top priority—what was of paramount importance was the attention of my students. I could work on the facts later.

As I plugged in an electric lamp with a naked lightbulb to represent the sun, I heard the seductive whine of a saxophone from the gonorrhea videotape. Just as I had figured out in which direction the earth rotates, I heard the substitute next door shout that her students were making the real teacher appear to be a liar—they weren't behaving nearly as well as she had indicated they would. Of course, good behavior is relative.

Never mind that my students were receiving a garbled message. Even if the students in the back couldn't hear a word I was saying, they could see my lamp as I circled it with a globe that still identified the Belgian Congo. As I looked into the eerily lit faces of my students in our semi-darkened space, I recognized that glazed look that comes only after several consecutive journeys on a roller coaster. It must be the glare of the lightbulb that had hypnotized my students, I told myself—as if they had stared into a campfire for too long.

But when I finished my demonstration and the overhead lights flickered back on to full power, the transfixed stares were still there. After fumbling through a few phrases about having my audience's undivided attention and about a section of our textbook that would enlighten them further on the subject, I realized what was happening.

In open classrooms we expect our students to tune out the noise that surrounds them and focus their attention on our own interesting lesson. But that silent discipline we expect our students to use to erect a barrier against the class next door can just as easily erect that barrier against the teacher directly in front of them.

Some teachers are instructionally successful in open classrooms—but I'm convinced this is not because of their classroom environments but in spite of them. In other words, good teachers are highly flexible and adaptable. When presented with obstacles, they immediately seek ways to cope with or subvert them.

Walk down the hallways of any open classroom school and notice the barriers that teachers have erected to mark off their space. Cabinets, chalkboards, dividers, maps, study carrels, and—alas—Old Glory herself serve as makeshift walls. Yet, though we may be able to block out actual eye contact with a neighboring class, we are unable to block out the noise.

Rather than go on adapting to the obstacle presented by open classrooms, we should tell our local boards of education our doubts about the soundness of this type of learning environment. It's not fair to us as professionals, nor is it fair to students, to go on trying to teach in an auditory crossfire.

Do lawyers counsel clients in open offices? Do physicians treat patients in full view of the waiting room? These professionals *could* function in open environments—but how effective would they be? Why should we assume that the art of teaching needs quiet and privacy any less than these professions?

As a matter of fact, you could make a case that teaching should have the quietest environment. In the lawyer-client and doctor-patient relationships, a previously learned skill is being used. In the classroom environment, a skill is being used to *teach* a skill—a process that itself is full of difficulties. Noise levels should not be added to the obstacles teachers and learners must overcome.

The major roadblock to closing open classrooms is that a mistake must be acknowledged. With acknowledgment comes blame, and then the inevitable waste of effort in trying to assess who did what to cause the problem.

But if we *don't* admit—and then correct—the mistake, our only alternative is to go on teaching children in an environment that works against us.

Just as the doctor and lawyer give their very best to aid their clients, so should the teacher. Students in open classrooms are being shortchanged, and we know it. Coping with the problem without trying to solve it gives our clients less than our best efforts. □

Nine of Ken Miller's 15 years as a teacher have been spent in open classrooms. For the past nine years, he's taught various aspects of social studies at Charlestown and River Valley Middle Schools in Jeffersonville, Ind., where he's a member of the Greater Clark County Education Association.

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Cold Cure Proves Elusive

The "common" cold is really a family of 600 or more viruses, with new ones always evolving. Small wonder that cold remedies are a billion-dollar-a-year business, with new ones rising and falling in popularity as quickly as top-ten pop songs. Here's the latest in cold-fighting trends.

► *Chicken soup*. The cold virus thrives in the nose, where the temperature is slightly below the body's 98.6°. Maybe that's why Mom gave us hot liquids and plugged in the vaporizer. For those who don't like chicken soup, the FDA has approved a $500 machine for warming the inside of the nose.

► *Zinc*. A Texas study found that volunteers could significantly reduce the length and severity of a cold if they let tablets of zinc gluconate slowly dissolve in their mouths. The stuff tastes so terrible that some volunteers became nauseated, so drug companies are working on a more palatable formula. Meanwhile, you can buy 180 mg tablets of zinc gluconate at a health food store. Suck on two at the first sign of a cold, and then one every two hours. Don't take more than 12 a day. This treatment is *not* recommended for children weighing under 60 pounds.

• *Antiseptic tissues*. Colds are spread mostly by touch. Since the cold virus can live for up to three hours on any surface, and a sick person typically contaminates 15 percent of any room he or she is in, colds spread quickly. Tissues treated to kill germs are now available. They're quite expensive and they won't help your cold, but they may keep you from spreading it.

• *Antibiotics*. Since colds are caused by viruses rather than bacteria, antibiotics are no help. In fact, taking them for colds may encourage dangerous antibiotics-resistant bacteria to take up residence in your body. Researchers say that indiscriminately prescribing antibiotics for a cold is the hallmark of a bad physician.

As the old saying goes, "Properly treated, a cold will last about seven days. Neglected, it will hang on an entire week!" □

Mind Your Medicine

A marketing study conducted recently by an over-the-counter (OTC) medicine manufacturers' association concluded that the average American has an ache or ailment every three days. We take 40 million OTC remedies each day—and fill more than 1.4 billion prescriptions each year. Some 75 million of us take one or more drugs at least once a week. Annual cost of all this pill-popping is about $23 billion.

Are we really this sick? Probably not. Some doctors think about half the money spent on medications is wasted. Far worse, statistics show that medicinal drugs cause over 125,000 deaths each year, due to misuse and complications. Even aspirin can be fatal if used incorrectly.

Since it's your body, it's your responsibility to make sure you take the right drug in the right manner, and only when necessary. Before buying any medication, ask your doctor or pharmacist—

► "What is the name of this medication, and what does it do?" In an emergency, this information can be vital.

► "How and when should I take it?"

► "Might there be side effects? What should I do if they occur?"

► "What should I *not* do while taking this?" (Did you know you shouldn't sunbathe while taking some antibiotics?)

► "How should I store this?" (Moisture, light, heat, even contact with plastic can harm some drugs.)

If you're not able to ask your pharmacist about an OTC item, read the label carefully. Some manufacturers operate toll-free information numbers. □

Pill Swallowing Made Easy

Many people have a difficult time swallowing pills. If you experience discomfort swallowing in general, you should see your doctor at once. But if only medications give you trouble, it's probably a psychological aversion.

Psychological or not, the discomfort is real. There are several tactics you can use to minimize your distress, but be sure to discuss them with your doctor or pharmacist first. For some drugs, these methods can cause problems.

The most common way to get a hard-to-swallow medicine to go down is to take it with a pleasant-tasting food or beverage. Unfortunately, certain food and drug combinations react adversely. For instance, dairy products reduce the effectiveness of several common antibiotics. Other drugs should be taken on an empty stomach.

Some people like to crush pills or break open tablets and mix them with something like applesauce. Another tactic is to dissolve the medication in water. This is a bad idea if the drug is designed to be released slowly, or to dissolve in a certain portion of the digestive track. Again, ask.

If you really hate to swallow pills, check whether the medication you're taking comes in a liquid or chewable form. Ask your doctor before the prescription is written, since the pharmacist may not be allowed to make the substitution. You may pay for this convenience, however. Most "children's" forms of medicine are more costly. □

ON THE HEALTH FRONT

Maintaining Good Eye Contacts

An explosion of new products has made it more comfortable and convenient than ever to wear contact lenses. But the widespread use of contacts has brought an increased incidence of serious eye problems.

Last summer the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported that the number of cases of Acanthamoeba keratitis had doubled in the past five years. CDC sees a link between this painful and potentially blinding infection and soft contact lenses.

Two-thirds of all contact wearers now use soft lenses. These are more comfortable, cheaper, and easier to fit than the hard type. Unfortunately, soft lenses need special care because they're porous and easily harbor germs. When wearers start taking their lenses for granted because they bought them at a department store and find them comfortable, they tend to get sloppy in their cleaning and handling of them. The result is often a serious eye infection.

Gaining in popularity are "extended wear" soft contacts that can be left in for weeks at a time. Although the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved them, some eye specialists worry that they cut down the oxygen that reaches the cornea and create an ideal breeding ground for bacteria.

This past summer, the FDA approved disposable lenses, meant to be worn for a week and then discarded. These greatly reduce the risk of infection but cost about 50 percent more each year than regular extended wear lenses, so people may be tempted to wear them too long.

Another development that has experts worried is the introduction of cosmetic contacts that simply change the color of the eyes. When teenagers share these contacts the way they share clothes, they can spread not just eye diseases but other infections as well.

If you wear contacts, take precautions:

► No matter what type of lenses you use, care for them scrupulously, using commercially prepared, not homemade, saline solutions.

► Don't wear soft lenses when swimming or using aerosol sprays. Don't sleep in them unless they're the extended wear variety—and even then sleep without them at least once a week to let your eyes "breathe."

► Never share contacts.

► Don't re-use disposable contacts.

► Be aware that medications, illness, and pregnancy can affect how your eyes handle contacts.

► Remove your lenses at the first sign of discomfort, redness, vision problems, or anything else unusual. If rest doesn't help, seek medical attention immediately. Because contact lenses desensitize your eyes, often you won't feel a problem until it becomes serious. □

The NEA Pharmacy

The NEA Prescription Service offers Association members a wide variety of prescription and nonprescription items at low prices, with the convenience of shopping by mail. Members also enjoy open credit privileges, allergic reaction checks, and a large selection of money-saving generics.

For more information and a free catalog, write to NEA Special Services Response Center, 51 Monroe St., Suite 200, Rockville, MD 20850, or call 800/637-4636 weekdays, 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. ET.

Between now and Dec. 31, 1987, the NEA Prescription Service is offering special discounts on contact lens care products to *NEA Today* readers. For price quotes, phone 800/247-1003 (in Iowa, 800/248-5502; in Alaska, call collect 515/287-6872). □

Letters

Censorship Threats

I read "Battling Censors" (Oct.) with great interest, especially since I was involved in a censorship issue a few years ago.

The reading series we were using in third grade included one page that was a demonstration of using playing cards to tell fortunes. *One* parent caused such a stink that we were almost forced to give up the series.

Fortunately, one other parent was even more determined to fight censorship. This parent forced my principal to get input from other parents—and not take action based on one parent's opinion.

Beth Wilson
Stroud, Oklahoma

I am a high school math teacher who happens to also be a Fundamentalist who is just as disgusted with censorship as is NEA. Reading or not reading a specific book assigned should be a decision within each family. I am disgusted that only non-Christian, anti-Christian, and neutral philosophies or ideas can be presented in our textbooks.

But right now I am most disgusted with the slanted reporting in *NEA Today* that is trying to lead NEA members to believe that all censorship attempts are being made by the fundamentalists and far-right organizations. The most prevalent attempt at censorship in central Florida at this time is the fight in Polk County by the NAACP to have *Huckleberry Finn* removed from the school system.

Alan W. Kent
Sebring, Florida

I know this letter is probably a waste of time because *NEA Today* usually practices the same tactics it so loudly accuses others of, namely censorship. "Battling Censors" (Oct.) is a blatant example of such hypocrisy.

How can any public school teacher be so stupid as to believe that he/she could recommend the reading of books containing profanity without seriously offending some parents? How could any public school teacher be so stupid as to believe that he/she could teach the theory of evolution as fact, without seriously offending someone?

In my school district we have had very few of these problems because our teachers recognize that we must attempt to serve all of our students and parents, not just a simple majority.

How many more parents are going to pull their students out of public schools before you people realize that a little less pride and a little more effort in the area of public relations will help preserve our jobs and achieve respectable salaries in the future?

Tim Morrill
Sandown, New Hampshire

Announcing: A Contest

Some people—the letter writers on this page, for instance—enjoy expressing themselves through the printed word. But others do wonders with pen-and-ink drawings. How about you? Is there an editorial cartoonist inside you just yearning for exposure? If so, you might want to enter the new *NEA Today* cartoon competition.

NEA Today is looking for NEA-member cartoonists whose work we can feature regularly on this "Letters" page. We're specifically looking for cartoonists who can capture the ups and the downs, the jubilation and the aggravation, of working in America's public schools.

Interested in entering? Please send three examples of your work—each no more than three panels—to Cartoons, *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Sorry, we can't return entries. The winning cartoonists will be announced in a forthcoming issue of *NEA Today*.

Should Schools Ban Staff from Smoking on the Premises?

Amen to Vera Hylsky's statements on smoking (Debate, Sept.). Although in total disagreement with Blossom Lippman's essay, I would not have been prompted to respond but for two of her "points," which I find infuriating:

1. She compares a ban on smoking to "the days when [teachers] couldn't use lipstick or date" and inquires whether anti-smokers would also approve of dress codes. Come on, Ms. Lippman. I can't believe you don't see the difference between restricting private behavior *that is harmless to others* and restricting behavior that endangers the health of innocent bystanders. In my school, as I'm sure in many others, there is only one small teachers' lounge and no other place to which a teacher can retreat.

2. Ms. Lippman fears that "anti-smoking biases" will render workplaces "sterile." It is indeed sad if smoking is needed to prevent sterility in the workplace.

Smoking is no longer simply an issue of "courtesy." Civil liberties may include the right to cause physical danger to yourself, if you so choose; they assuredly do not include the right to cause such danger to others.

Reva Riffkin
Attleboro, Masachusetts

Blossom Lippman's reasons for permitting smoking on school premises by staff gave credence to exactly why it *shouldn't* be allowed: "Because of the addictive qualities of nicotine, it can be physically excruciating. . .to survive the day without a smoke. . .with the stresses and anxieties. . .in our schools, cigarettes provide a much-longed-for. . .satisfaction and pleasure."

The same can be said for alcohol, marijuana, crack, and cocaine. Even legal drugs such as Valium and Librium could relax a teacher. However, I certainly wouldn't want to work with teachers who are dependent on drugs (nicotine included) to get through the day. It would be better that they receive counseling for their "stresses and anxieties."

Mary Jane Bach
New Port Richey, Florida

I was surprised to read in Blossom Lippman's argument that "when most of us think back to our school days, we have no memory of teachers who smoked. That's because smoking wasn't—and still isn't—done in front of students."

I have a very strong memory of my eighth grade teacher who smoked. I had a hard time with math, and she was always encouraging me to ask her for help. Although she was very good at explaining problems, I hated to ask. My class was right after lunch, and she always reeked of smoke. My eyes would water and I would have a hard time breathing.

Now, as a teacher myself, I know that what I do does affect my students. I teach by example: I don't smoke.

Kathy Fugitt
San Francisco, California

Cultural Literacy

Let's hear it for Dr. Hirsch and Cultural Literacy ("Book Beat," Sept.). For nearly four centuries since Rousseau, and in this century with John Dewey, education has been mesmerized by the promise of "teach anything by teaching skills." And, to paraphrase Emerson, we produce skilled talkers with nothing to talk to each other about.

The reactionary claim by reviewer Rosemarie Park that Dr. Hirsch's proposal constitutes some sort of "white male European" plot is nothing but a scare tactic, a cliche from the 1970s. If Ms. Park had *read* Dr. Hirsch's book, she would have discovered that his compendium of cultural literacy is proposed as a preliminary list only, and he and his associates are preparing an independent, complete work for publication in 1988.

John Avelis
Mohomet, Illinos

Sex Bias on Campus

The September *NEA Today* ("Trends") reported a study by the Women's Research and Equity Institute showing that 27 percent of higher education faculty, but only 10 percent of full professors, are women.

The Florida Board of Regents has just completed a salary equity report that further confirms the difficulty women face in improving their representation on college faculties. Although the number of women with advanced degrees is increasing (33.5 percent of all doctoral degrees in the U.S. are now awarded to women), salaries lag behind.

In Florida last year, only 29 percent of the newly hired female faculty received salaries the same as, or higher than, their newly hired male counterparts. Only 4 percent of new female faculty were hired at the rank of professor, compared to 16.5 percent of newly hired males.

There's a clear need to work to ensure that higher education institutions offer equitable opportunities for their female employees.

Jim Wilson, President
United Faculty of Florida
Tallahassee, Florida

Teacher Salaries

The feature on teachers' salaries ("Breaking $40,000," June), like the rest of NEA's coverage of this subject, deals only with the salaries of teachers who remain in the same district through all the available salary steps.

Wake up! RIFing remains a real problem, and with declining enrollments still a fact of everyday teaching life, RIF will face many for some time to come.

RIFed teachers who must begin again in another district are often offered the salaries of starting teachers, regardless of experience! The difference between the salary I receive and the one I would receive were all my experience credited in my present district is $11,000 *per year*. Compare this with the salary schedule in the district from which I was RIFed, and the difference jumps to $15,000 annually.

Being chosen "Teacher of the Year" in my school was a pleasant experience, but it just doesn't pay my bills.

Eileen F. Vizcaino
South Amboy, New Jersey

Pupil-Teacher Ratios

Who supplied the information concerning pupil-teacher ratio in Louisiana ("State Side," Sept.)? The basic figures may be correct, but the number of students enrolled in classes greatly exceeds the ratio reported. Administrators, speech therapists, librarians, and other support personnel may be included in the formula used by the state to figure the number of teachers allotted to each school district.

Maureen M. Rogers
Houma, Louisiana

Shame on us for publishing misleading information. "Pupil-teacher ratio" is the number of students in a teacher's room, and if we don't have that information, then let us publish no figures.

Class size matters, and we certainly don't need to count administrators, counselors, and specialists who work with three or four children at a time, and average it together, then gull the public into thinking we have 17 kids in a class.

Lee Walsh
Fajardo, Puerto Rico

Ed. Note: Our data were supplied by state departments of education for NEA's annual Estimates of School Statistics. *The ratios are simply the result of dividing state-level classroom teacher totals by pupil totals. (Administrators, counselors, health personnel, and others without teaching responsibilities are excluded when counting teachers.) As the introduction to the table tried to explain, these statewide pupil-teacher ratios do* not *represent class size.*

Obese Students

I applaud *NEA Today's* efforts to promote the issue of childhood obesity as a proper concern of teachers. I take exception, however, to the language used in "Waisted Lives. . . ." ("Trends," Sept.)

Overweight children have to work harder than many of their thinner classmates to develop a positive self-image. They are under an added handicap when they're the target of stereotypical language emphasizing weight over other personal qualities.

This item, in the space of fewer than 100 words and a drawing, made five presumably humorous references to obesity. These references are not humorous, nor are they appropriate.

Kim Davison
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Adapting for Lefties

I am a sinistral who has great interest in writing habits, especially those of my fellow left-handers. Every week, in stores, banks, and libraries, I run across young left-handers who write with a hook—that is, with their left wrists bent at a right angle. Why is this so?

On the assumption that at least some of these contortions may be the result of teachers' still not adapting writing methods for left-handers, let me describe to the readers of *NEA Today* an easy adaptation. Have left-handed students tilt their papers 30º to the right—just the opposite of right-handed students—and they'll be able to write with a straight wrist. Left-handed youngsters who start writing this way should have no trouble. Those who've already gotten used to the hook will find it takes time to unlearn it.

J. N. Ramsey
Arvada, Colorado

Address correspondence to "Letters," NEA Today, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. We reserve the right to edit letters for length.

Debate

Are year-round schools good for students and staff?

Joe Di Dio

Nile Miner teaches fourth and fifth grade at the Orchard Elementary School in Orem, Utah, where he's a member of the Alpine Education Association. He chose to transfer to Orchard, with its year-round program, two years ago—and doesn't regret his decision.

YES

Year-round education programs can work. I teach in one that does.

There are a number of different year-round plans—Concept Six, Trimester, and 45/15, to name a few. I'm most familiar with 60/15, the program we have at Orchard Elementary School.

Our students are in five "tracks." Each track attends school for 60 days, followed by 15 days "off-track" for a three-week vacation. There are three of these cycles for each of the five tracks in our 11-month school year. One group of students is always "off-track" while the other four are in school.

So students attend school for 180 days a year—while teachers work on an 11-month, 241-day extended contract. All students and teachers share a common, four-week summer vacation.

I transferred to Orchard because I saw advantages to the year-round system. Increased salary was the number one issue for me. The extended contract means 41 additional days' pay—11 months' work for 11 months' pay.

This represents a pay increase of approximately 23 percent, made possible by the higher student population at the school. I'd much rather teach school at my present daily salary than look for a summer job, often at minimum wage. An added benefit is that I have a four-week vacation that I can actually use as vacation!

Class size is an important issue to all teachers, especially in Utah, which has the largest classes in the nation. Year-round school brings smaller classes because 20 percent of the students are always "off-track."

Teachers have responsibility for more students, but those students are never all in the classroom at one time. Before transferring to Orchard School, my fifth grade classes had between 30 and 35 students. At Orchard, I have 35 children enrolled, but an average of 28 attending at any given time.

Another benefit of a year-round program is that the shortened summer vacation reduces the "loss of learning" that tends to occur over a three-month summer break.

Orchard's team teaching program, combined with the three-week student breaks every two months, makes for easy regrouping of students. Students having difficulty mastering concepts can be put in a group and retaught without being labeled as "slow." And students who have mastered the concepts can be moved ahead.

Educational materials are more plentiful under our year-round plan. The school has more funds available for textbooks and other materials, and with students coming and going, materials and equipment are put to more economical use. At Orchard, teachers do not share rooms.

Aides and specialists can also be hired from saved funds. Instead of the allotted one specialist half-time to provide elementary teachers a half-hour preparation daily, we have two specialists at Orchard, giving teachers a full hour of planning time.

Even when children are "off-track," they can come to Orchard for special events such as tutoring programs, assemblies, field trips, and holiday activities.

Another advantage concerns vacations. Utah's ski slopes traditionally tempt students to cut classes during the winter. Our three-week student breaks thoughout the year allow for ski vacations—and fewer absences.

In fact, we've found our program provides families with greater vacation flexibility. Some families have chosen to put their children in different tracks. They take their family vacation during the four-week summer break (ours is in July). Then each child can participate in his or her individual interests during the three-week breaks—and have time alone with parents while siblings are in school.

Year-round programs open up a range of possibilities—and, of course, some problems. I've found that the Orchard School 60/15 program solves more problems than it creates.

Joe Di Dio

Darlene Roker teaches fourth grade at Vermont Avenue School and is a member of United Teachers-Los Angeles' year-round school committee. A supportive administration keeps her at Vermont Avenue—despite the fact that it's a year-round school.

NO

When teachers from "traditional schools" ask if I like the year-round program I've been on for six years, my usual reply is that I've made it work for me.

But, I hasten to add, as far as quality education and my students are concerned, I must respond with a resounding *no* to year-round schools. There are too many disadvantages in this seemingly permanent "stopgap" solution to overcrowding.

How does a year-round program work? Schedules usually contain one more teacher and class than there are classrooms in each grade level grouping. Students are "tracked" according to arbitrary geographical boundaries, with all but one track assigned to permanent classrooms. The different plans (45/15, 60/20, 90/30) refer to the number of days in class followed by vacation days.

Teachers without permanent classrooms rove into rooms that are vacated on a rotating basis—moving books, materials, projects, and students. Those unfortunate enough to be on the roving track must create an exciting, motivating climate in three different rooms a dozen times between July and June.

But, in an era of budgetary constraints, why not embrace this alternative to double sessions? Simply put, students on a 12-month schedule are shortchanged throughout the year.

In Los Angeles, the year begins in July. While students in traditional schools are enjoying that needed growth period between grades, year-round students have just three to 15 days to leap—mentally and physically—from grade to grade. It's an abrupt transition, especially from half-day kindergarten to full-day first grade.

This is especially true when classrooms reach 86°F and the windows will not open. Air conditioning? In some districts long-promised cool air has been held up by hot air and rhetoric in the state capitol.

Because year-round students' vacations may not correspond to those of their parents, it's common for children to miss between one and four weeks of instruction at the beginning of the school year for family vacations.

Even more common are students who transfer in September from a nine-month district. Already overloaded teachers must see that missed work is assigned, understood, and made up.

Year-round students miss many summer programs. Scout camps, swimming classes, YMCA activities, even remedial summer school are all benefits usually closed to year-round children. In California, that mostly means inner-city children, who desperately need these opportunities.

Students may also miss school programs that are only offered on certain tracks, such as science labs or elementary special education. Participation in all-year programs, like band and sports, suffers from lack of continuity as students go on and off track.

And there are inconveniences. Textbooks seem to be locked up downtown in the summer—traditional inventory time. State-mandated standardized tests must be scheduled around off-track times. Curriculum units are dictated by the length of on-track periods.

How do year-round teachers fare? Fragmented teacher relationships result from the division into tracks. Gone is the feeling of community and mutual support. We're shift workers—coming and going every few weeks.

The most crucial problem is teacher burnout. For those finally earning enough without moonlighting, the periodic vacations can rejuvenate and refresh. But many teachers depend on the income from additional jobs. For year-round teachers, this most likely means substituting when off-track—hardly a respite. Gone as well are opportunities for summer workshops and continuing education credits.

I come back to my resounding *no*. Year-round schools are not an acceptable long-term solution to overcrowding. "The lesser of two evils" should not be our students' education. □

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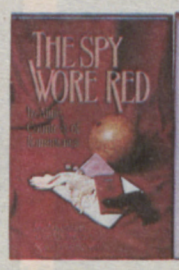

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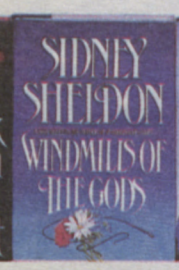

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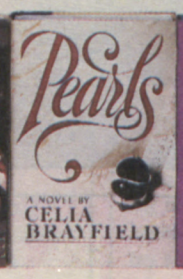

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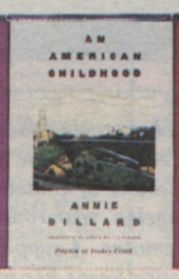

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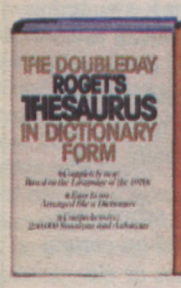

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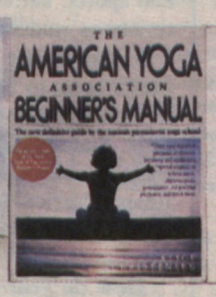

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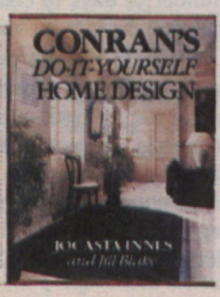

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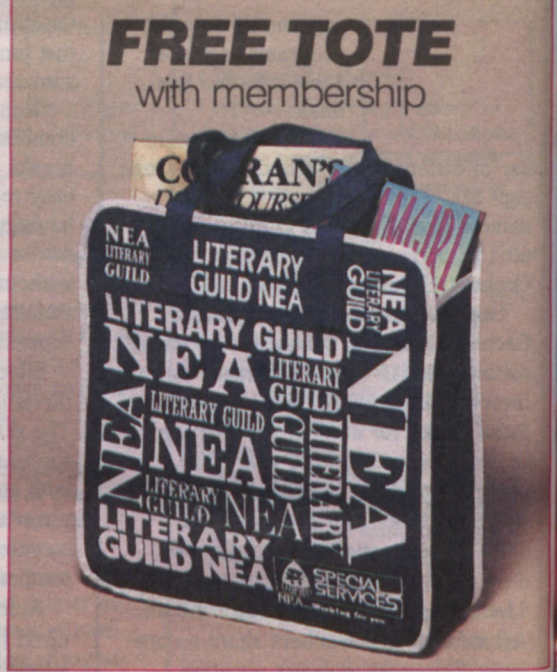

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